



THE KUPPUSWAMI SASTRI  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE,  
MADRAS.

THE HINDŪ GOD UNIVERSAL



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BY

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## FOREWORD

DURING my ceaseless tour of lecturing for the past twenty years and more throughout almost the whole length and breadth of India, when I visited small stations even, I delivered many discourses, both public and private, on the question of God and other topics. When a little respite after a hard year's work was accorded to my body each year, there was a tendency in it more to take rest than to sit up and write. With the body jaded and the brain awirling, it was indeed difficult to go in for a serious writing. Having had no shorthand reporter to report the speeches, the difficulty of writing them out became enhanced.

As my regular lecturing work ceased a short while ago, though temporarily I hope, through the kindness of Mrs. Besant I was able to recuperate my body and do some writing work. Thus I was able to rewrite these lectures on the Hindū Worship of God, delivered in the different places in India, besides bringing out the books already published.

Here I should offer my thanks to Mr. Ernest Udny for his kindness in revising my MS.



## THE RECONCILIATION OF THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF WORSHIP OF GOD

THE theme of this discourse is, in my opinion, of profound sacredness and significance. Why of profound sacredness? Whatever religion be examined, we find the be-all and end-all of every religious cult is God. No matter under what name and with what characteristics the God of each religion is figured—whether It be called the Father or Parabrahman or Ahura Mazdāh or Allah or by any other name—the concept of God is a matter of the profoundest sacredness. No sooner does the devotee of each religion utter the name of his God and contemplate His nature, than a thrill of elation moves his innermost being, and he is transported into the highest realm of beatitude.

Why of great importance? In the name of God, all nations, as one author has put it, have begun to hate and kill one another. In the early days of Christianity, crusade after crusade was embarked on in the name of the Father, as if the Father were their special property. Battle after battle was fought in which blood flowed like water. In the Middle Ages, bigoted



ecclesiastical divines made it a mark of their faith in the Christ to put to death helpless victims, like infants and women of other faiths, as if God were a Moloch to be appeased only by the offering of human victims at His altar. Even in India where Hindūism is a really catholic religion, we find that sectarian disputes are rife—not so much between the followers of Śiva and Viṣṇu as between the sub-sects of Viṣṇu. There are the Vadagalais and the Teṅgalais, the ‘U’ mark Vaishṇavites and the ‘Y’ mark Vaishṇavites who break their heads in rioting within the very precincts of the temple where should reign perfect peace and concord. About such paltry things as water and cakes and precedence, costly suits arise which are carried up to the Privy Council, enriching the pockets of lawyers and barristers.

It is not in the domain of religion alone that the question of God arises. Philosophy—rather Metaphysics—also comes in for its share of wrangling about it. There is the field of ontology where this question is thrashed out. Shall the god of Theology steer in one boat and the god of Metaphysics in another? That is really the position in which the western metaphysics and religion find themselves. If really there be one common Universal Father, He cannot belong to one set or class of persons or to one nation only. He should be common to all humanity.

My object in taking up this question is to try to point out a way of peace between all the combatants—religionists and metaphysicians. My endeavour will be to allay the dissensions between them and not to

foment them. If we study Hindūism deeply, we find a common platform properly constructed upon which all can stand, no matter to what religion or metaphysics they may belong. Each man may adopt his own independent attitude and avow his own belief : but yet may shake hands as a brother with another of a different belief.

In discussing this question, I do not propose to enter into the proofs of the existence of God. Those that have studied the proofs know full well the difficulties attendant upon the question. Hindūism with profound insight, states that the proofs lie in one's Self. The proof of Ātmā or Spirit lies only in the Ātmā within. Hence the *Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad* says :

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।

यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनुं स्वाम् ॥

—III, ii, 3.

“The Paramātmā cannot be gained by exposition, by understanding or by the study of the many Śrutiis : it can be obtained by the Jivātmā by which it is desired. His Ātmā reveals its own truth.”

Let us examine the different aspects under which God is worshipped. Only after understanding these different phases, in the different periods of time, can the reconciliation of belief be effected. As these phases are many in number, we shall take into our consideration the important ones only, beginning with a rapid sketch of the field of study. First we shall take up

what is called fetish worship—the worship of God in stocks and stones. A person picks up a stone or piece of wood in the road yonder and calls it God. Another person who has taken a higher view would call it a desecration. He would pick up a granite stone and would sculpture out of it the figure of God and after purifying it, worship it; or taking wood, would carve out a figure for his worship. A Hindū would perhaps magnetise it with certain Mantras and Tantras—magical words and operations—and impart to it certain religious efficacy. Another would rise from the solid to the liquid for worship. In the Sandhyā worship of the Hindūs, there is a certain Vedic Mantra beginning with “Āpo hishthā-mayo-bhuvah,” etc. Here the *devatā* or intelligence presiding over water is worshipped as, according to the Hindū, there is no particle of matter divorced from its intelligence. Just as the physical water cleanses the physical body, so also Varuṇa, the Intelligence presiding over water is invoked for cleansing the mind. Then we rise to the third state of Agni or fire. Here we may refer to the fire-worshippers of the Zoroastrians. They rear up for worship a perpetual fire in the *homakuṇḍa* or fire-pit in their temples and administer to it not ordinary wood but sandalwood. Hence they consider it a sacrilege to offer dead bodies and other impure things to fire. They have, what is called, a round tower of silence where are reared up many vultures. As soon as the dead body is taken into the tower through its narrow door by the undertakers, the birds of prey fall upon it and make short work of it, leaving the skeleton

alone. Among the Hindūs, there are Agnihoṭra and Yajñas where fire is worshipped. Then we come to the air where the Vāyu-worship is conducted. In the *Chhāndogya-Upanishad*, Prapāthaka IV is related the story of a Ṛshi named Raikva initiating a king named Jānasruṭi into this worship called Samvarga-Vidyā. Then there is the Ākāśa-Vidyā in the Upanishads where the ether is worshipped.

Let us now scale from the terrestrial sphere to the heavenly. There is, what is called, heliolatry or the worship of the Sun: lunalatry or the worship of the moon; astrolatry or the worship of the stars. The Chaldeans of old were, it is said, great astrologers and astronomers and practised the worship of the heavenly bodies. The Hindūs call this Navagrahapūjā, where not only the seven heavenly bodies but also the two nodes of the moon called Rāhu and Keṭu are propitiated. Then we rise from the so-called inorganic kingdom to the organic. We first meet with the worship of plants. The Druids of old worshipped the mistletoe and the oak at Christmas. The question whether they were justified in this or not, we shall discuss later on. In the East, we have the worship of the Asvatṭha tree or *ficus religiosa*. In going up to the animal kingdom, we find this worship obtaining in some form or another in some of the religions. In Egypt, the civilisation of which has been taken so far back into the past through the mummies preserved underground intact for many centuries, the worship of animals occurred. In one of the papyrus found with the dead body of a

king, it was enacted that in his reign the killing of a hawk would be meted with punishment, since the hawk was considered sacred to Osiris, the Sun. It is unnecessary for me to state that in India monkeys, cows, some birds and other animals are considered sacred. Even in Christianity, the dove and the lamb are considered sacred (though they may not be worshipped), since they are made the symbols of the Holy Ghost and the Christ respectively. Then ascending to the higher animal, *viz.*, man, we find from a cursory standpoint, that all religions have adopted him for worship. The founder of each religion is worshipped. Though in Buddhism, its founder Gauṭama Buddha spoke against it, yet he has been actually worshipped. In Hindūism, there have been the many founders of R̥shis, as well as the different Avatāras who are being worshipped.

Some are loath to worship God through the proxy of a man and therefore wish to reach God directly. Here there are two aspects current; one is personal worship and the other, anthropomorphic. In the first case, let us imagine the form of a human being and magnify it many thousands of times, so as to extend it throughout the whole universe. We may then have a poor concept of a personal God. In Hindūism, it is called Virāt-svarūpa which was shown on the field of Kurukshetra by Śrī-Kṛṣṇa to his beloved disciple, Arjuna. It was a magnified human form with many thousands of hands, eyes, etc. Others who are unwilling to superimpose upon God any limitation of a human body endow him with

human attributes, and so make him anthropomorphic. In Milton, the Father is said to have been angry with Satan. In his graphic words, "Him the Almighty hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky down to bottomless perdition." Here anger though in a just cause, a human attribute condemnable in a human being, is attributed to God. Moreover the fact of Satan being different from God limits God and hence makes Him a perishable Being. Hence philosophers like Herbert Spencer make God, the Absolute. Analysing all into three Time, Space and Causality or Consciousness, they make God be above them—not be limited by them. If He should be above destruction, he should be present in all space. Where he is excluded from even a mathematical point in Space, he would be subject to decay. Through the law of impacts, any body having space outside will corrode sooner or later. Any big object extending throughout space but being absent in a certain spot will eventually wear away, even though the process take long. Hence a God that is everywhere, except in a little point in space, will be subject to destruction. Therefore God is said to be infinite or without end in space. He is said to be eternal. In Him, the limited periods of the past, present and future do not exist. There was no time in the past when He was not; there will be no time in the future when He will not be. Regarding the present, He is always. Hence in Him, no relative periods of time exist. He is also said to be the Absolute. The word "Absolute" coming from *solus*—alone, He is One only. None other but He. In

consciousness or thinking, there is always a duality—subject and object, or cause and effect. There should be the thinker or the subject to think of another, *viz.*, the object; or whenever we think of an object, we think of its cause or effect. But God is one only. He is the causeless cause. Hence the Absolute is said to be eternal and infinite. This is the highest concept of God. Beyond it, imagination cannot soar.

Now in these different concepts of God from fetish worship to the Absolute, what is the right and proper concept of God? All reason, all common sense will dictate that the last concept of God, *viz.*, the Absolute is the right one. If God is said to be indestructible, as all religionists put it, He should be the Absolute One above Time, Space and Causality. It is such a concept alone that can stand all logic. Hindūism states the very same thing. As the Hindū writers put it, It is *Deśa-Kāla-Vastu—aparichchhedam*—or not cut or conditioned by space, time and things or duality. It is the non-dual one, not limited by time and space.

But should this God alone be predicated, then we shall be landing all religionists in difficulties. The churches will have to be closed; the temples will be out of place and all the missionaries of different religions will have to vacate their offices and profession: since the Absolute is one that is incapable of worship. The highest faculty of man with which the worship of God can be conducted is the mind. But God is above the mind. The latter is dual, but God is non-dual.

How can the dual mind think of a non-dual God? As the *Taittirīya-Upanishad* says :

यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह ॥

—Bramhānandavalli, 9.

‘That from which all words with mind return without having been able to reach It.’ According to this Upanishad therefore, God is indescribable and unthinkable. How is this seeming insuperable difficulty to be tided over? In the West, the Christian theologians wanted to have some object of worship to be thought of by the mind; but the philosophers that thought logically came to the conclusion that God was above the mind even and held to the existence of the Absolute. Hence they could not meet one another. A philosopher like Sir William Hamilton who inclined to the theologians’ view of worship held to an anthropomorphic character of worship, though he could not support it on a logical basis. But Hindūism makes us tide over the difficulty in a logical manner. It holds to the view that the conditioned is an aspect of the unconditioned, that the relative is but a mode of the absolute. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upanishad* says :

द्वे वाव ब्रह्मणो रूपे मूर्ति चैवामूर्ति च मर्त्यं चामृतं च स्थितं च यच्च  
सच्च यच्च ॥ १ ॥

—Adhyāya II, Brahmaṇa iii.

‘There are two modes of Brahman, the one with mūrṭi and the other without mūrṭi; the one mortal



and the other immortal; the one finite and the other infinite: again the one existing and the other, beyond.

There are two aspects of Brahman (God), without mūrṭi and with mūrṭi. As Apte's Dictionary defines mūrṭi: परिच्छिन्नं प्रमाणवत्त्वं क्रियावत्त्वं वा ।

‘It is that which has a conditioned (pramāṇa) size and kriyā (vibration).’

Hence God has two aspects, unconditioned and conditioned. The conditioned is an aspect of the unconditioned. A philosopher will argue that the word ‘unconditioned’ implies its opposite. We may, as an illustration, suppose a line having no beginning and no end called infinite. We may cut off a part by marking a point in it as the beginning and another point in it as the end. To take another illustration from geometric progression. An infinite series may begin from one with a common factor; and another infinite series may begin backwards from minus 1 with the same common factor. All these make zero: while from them, a portion may be taken which represents a limited quantity. Such a portion is called Amsa in Sanskrit writings.

These two aspects of God are described thus in the *Chhāṇḍogya-Upanishad*:

यत्र नान्यत्पश्यति नान्यच्छृणोति नान्यद्विजानाति स भूमा ।

यत्रान्यत्पश्यति अन्यच्छृणोति अन्यद्विजानाति तदल्पम् ॥

—Adhyāya VII, Khanda 24.

‘Where one can neither see another, nor hear another, nor know another, that is the great; but where one can see another, or hear another, or know

another, that is the small.' In the absolute state where it is one only, there is no possibility of seeing, hearing or knowing another ; but in the relative state where there is duality existent, perception and knowledge of another are possible.

This conditioned state is said in another book, called the *Vishṇu-Purāṇa*, to be this perishable universe, which is logically true ; the Absolute being above all destruction.

The first Ansa, last Chapter says :

द्वे रूपे ब्रह्मणस्तस्य मूर्ते चामूर्तमेव च ।  
क्षरोऽक्षर स्वरूपेते सर्वभूतेषु अवस्थिते ।  
अक्षरं तत्परं ब्रह्म क्षरं सर्वमिदं जगत् ॥

'There are two aspects (or modes) of this Brahman, without mūrṭi and with mūrṭi ; the indestructible and the destructible and inhering in all things. The indestructible is the Supreme Brahman ; the destructible is all this universe.'

So that all the universe is nothing but the lower or relative aspect of the Absolute Brahman. All the universe is not this visible physical alone but also the invisible. According to Hindūism, the invisible universe is not one alone but many in number. At the root of the invisible universes, the duality is existent. There is the one universal Intelligence conditioned by the One Matter called Mūlaprakṛti through which He has the idea of Aham or Self and through which He identifies Himself with the whole universe. He is called variously as 'Īsvara' or

Mahāvishṇu. In Him is the Trinity; the three in One. Matter having the three guṇas or properties of Tamas, Saṭṭva and Rajas or immobility, rhythm and mobility makes the intelligence manifest as three; through Tamas or immobility, there manifests Śiva; through Saṭṭva or rhythm, Viṣṇu; and through Rajas or mobility, Brahmā. The one Īśvara as Brahmā creates through Rajas, preserves as Viṣṇu through Saṭṭva; and destroys and regenerates as Śiva through Tamas. Then from this Īśvara who through his powers of Trinity, is at the root of the primeval invisible universe down to the very grass and particle of matter of this visible physical universe, all are manifestations of the one Absolute. Therefore the real God is only Brahman, the Absolute. Even the Trinity and all else are but Its manifestations that are perishable, though they may last long or short as the case may be. According to Hindūism, even the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, which correspond to the Trinity of Hindūism are liable to death. As the Absolute Brahman is above thought and impossible of worship, his manifestations are taken up for worship. In taking up such manifestations, some take up the higher; others, the lower. But all have to take up only some manifestations of God for worship. These different manifestations may be regarded as the different steps in the ladder of worship. One may stand on a higher step in the ladder; another on a lower step. But all have to outgrow the ladder in order to reach the real God of Brahman. Therefore a Hindū finds no logical absurdity in a person worshipping a stone as God, since a stone is as much a

manifestation of God as is a higher form of worship—nay the highest.

In these different grades of worship, Hindūism leaves each man free to adopt the form of worship best suited to him. There are men of different grades of evolution; and what is suited to one cannot be suitable to another. A fetish worship suitable to a negro will not satisfy the needs of a highly evolved man of the present day; and, *vice versa*, a high form of mental worship will but confound a negro. Even among the cultured, the forms of worship will have to vary. The chief mistake that is being made nowadays even by some thinking men is that they try to impose their form of worship upon others, simply because it answers to their needs well. They even go to the length of ridiculing those that differ from them. It is like a higher-class boy laughing at a boy of a lower class for studying not his lessons but the lessons of a lower form. The only feasible plan is to lay down the theory and put forth the different grades of worship, so that those that can go in for a higher grade of worship may be induced to do so. Only we should not unsettle the minds of those who cannot adopt a higher form of worship by placing before them such.

In thus placing before men two aspects of God, the unconditioned and the conditioned—the unconditioned as God *per se* and the conditioned as His manifestation for worship, two objects can be achieved. One is that all the fights and acrimonious disputes about God can be averted; and the second is that the religion

can be made universal. All the different religionists can be reconciled on the ground that they are bound to the one common goal of the Absolute God that is above all worship and that the different forms of worship are but the means to that end. The philosopher need not be sent out of court, as the Absolute finds a place herein. At the same time, he need not dispute the worship obtaining among the religionists. Thus will philosophy and religion move together in friendship as tending towards the same goal. In Hindūism, both philosophy and religion find a place as one.

What is the criterion of the universalism of a religion? A Christian ecclesiastical divine by the name of Rev. Dr. Barrows, of Chicago fame, came out to India in connection with the Haskell mission for delivering lectures on Christianity. In one of his lectures on the "Universalism of Christianity" he laid down, at the outset, two important criteria of universalism and then proceeded to other minor grounds. The two main grounds of the universal character of Christianity were that the Christians had firstly more followers and secondly more dominions under their control. Taking the statistics of the population of the different religions, he found that Buddhism ranked the first in population and Christianity, the second. To clear Buddhism out of his way, he stated there were many followers of Confucius in China who were wrongly classed under the heading of Buddhists and that, if that number were eliminated, Christianity was first in number and hence more universal. Carlyle

says that fools are greater in number than the wise. Shall the decision of the fools outweigh that of the wise, we ask? The opinion of the majority cannot always hold good.

The second argument about 'Universalism' is that the Christians have more dominions under their control. The Christ has stated: 'Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.' Had that principle been followed strictly by the Christians, I do not know whether they could have under their control the dominions they now possess. Thus the Christian religion is not responsible for the extent of their dominions.

The criterion that I would lay down for the universalism of a religion is that it should adapt itself to the various grades of intelligence, and yet be logical. Judged by this standard, Hindūism is able to adjust itself to the needs of all and yet be logical on this most important question of God. The veriest dunce can find a place therein as well as the greatest metaphysical genius. All the different kinds of worship are to be found in the Hindū religion. None need go out of it, to find a phase of worship or concept of God that is found in other religions or philosophies. While making the question of God universal, the Hindū religion puts it also upon the most logical basis. It resorts to the most metaphysical and reasonable arguments to support its position. Only those that have studied the *Vedānta-Sūtras* deeply can appreciate them.

Christianity too can be made universal regarding the question of God if its adherents will rise above their first Person of Trinity. The word person comes from the root *persona*, mask. Hence even the first Person or Father is a masked being and therefore perishable. The Father corresponds to Śiva of the Hindū Trimūrṭi, who is a perishable factor. Like Hindūism, the Christian religion has to rise to the One above the Father. S. Paul states, 'There is no God but One.' If the Christians of to-day rise to this One above the Trinity, then they can bring their religion into a line with philosophy and other religions too. Thus they need not give up their Father for worship, though they may hold to the idea of the Absolute.

## THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF DIVINE WORSHIP

THERE are different stages of the worship of God scaling up from the lowest to the highest, *viz.*, Īsvara, the conditioned God, till outgrowing Him we attain the Absolute where no worship obtains. It is with reference to the last stage that all the discord arises between the non-dualists, qualified non-dualists and dualists: the dualists urging that we reach the Absolute: the non-dualists urging, we are It, only the veil of māyā being removed.

Without entering into these controversies here, we shall understand the different phases of worship where the worshipper has to start the worship, as if he were different from God. Even the conditioned God being coextensive with the universe may be supposed to be everywhere from the standpoint of the isolated man. The mind of man has to think of "without" and "within", before it thinks of a state where "without" and "within" are lost and 'everywhere' obtains. At first he has to worship God without himself or within himself, since God is everywhere. Shall we ask a negro or any other person in a very low state of evolution to



worship the God within or without himself? If he be asked to worship within at first, he will but worship his body, since he has not arrived at a stage when he can differentiate himself from his body. Therefore external worship is prescribed in the early stages. Should the mind be again and again thrown out on an external object in worship and identify itself with that object, there occurs a stage when it finds that it is different from the body. According to Hindūism, whenever the mind thinks of an object, it becomes of the form of that object and brings back a thought-image of it. Through repeated thoughts of the object adored, the mind feels its oneness with it; then it feels its separateness from the body; then a higher stage of internal worship is imparted to it. It is convinced or realises that the body is like a house where it can move from one room to another, from one centre to another, and not that it is the house of the body itself. When it is at home in this stage too, then it is taken up to a still higher stage where externality and internality are lost. But the Upanishads make mention of a state between where externality and internality are both seen simultaneously in two planes touching one another. It is not for us to enter into this subtle aspect here. We shall here take up the three stages of 'without, within and everywhere'.

Therefore in the *Uttara-Gītā* we have the following passage : अग्निर्देवो द्विजातीनां मुनीनां हृदि दैवतम् ।

प्रतिमास्वल्पबुद्धीनां सर्वत्र विदितात्मनाम् ॥

‘To the twice-born, God is in the fire ; to the Munis, in the heart ; to the less-learned, in the images ; to the wise, everywhere.’ In the above quotation, two stages are stated in external worship, *viz.*, images and fire ; one in the internal *viz.*, the heart ; the fourth one referring to the worship of God everywhere.

In the worship of God who is in each and every object, it does not matter what object in nature is taken for worship. Once upon a time when Mrs. Besant asked Madame Blavatsky what object she should take up for worship, the latter taking a match out of a match-box before her said, ‘ My dear, meditate upon this.’ God is in all objects and it does not matter what object is taken up for fixity of mind. That which does really matter is the concentration of the mind. But familiarity breeds contempt. Hence any familiar object, if taken up for worship, only evokes contempt and disgust on the part of the ignorant. A really knowing man does not care what object he takes up, since he knows that God is everywhere. But the ignorant is one that cannot think. He should not be shown for worship any object treated with disdain by him. The mind cannot fix itself long upon any object not loved by it. Hence images were made in Hindūism with certain rites and ceremonies and installed in temples, to instil devotion in him towards them. They were also made to be gifted with certain powers.

Images are of two kinds. *Pratimā* and *Pratīka*, the ordinary and the symbolical. In the ordinary

image, it is made like an ordinary human being with hands, legs, etc. But in the symbolical, it is made sometimes with four hands or five human heads and the organs corresponding to them, sometimes with an elephant head, etc. They are called *Pratīkas*. The object is to make a man, when intelligence dawns in him, to rise to higher grades of worship, since these are merely steps in the ladder of worship, till he rises to the Absolute. Should the mere *Pratīmā* or ordinary image be placed before him, his curiosity will not be aroused to question further and rise to higher stages.

Therefore *pratīkas* were prescribed. In the *Veṅḍānta Sūtras*, there are two *Sūtras* 4 and 5 regarding this question in *Adhyāya* IV, i.

नप्रतीके नही सह । ब्रह्मदृष्टिर्कषात् ॥

‘Therefore (do) not (stop) with *Pratīka* alone because the Brāhmic vision should be elevated (and not degraded.)’ On this, *Śrī Śaṅkarācārya* comments that it will be elevating the servant of a master by calling him by the master’s name and not his. So we should rise to higher stages by contemplating upon these symbolic images and understanding the significance of the symbols. We should not tarry on the road with the symbols alone as the end, as almost all the Hindū worshippers of images now do. When thus a certain kind of proficiency is obtained in the worship of the images, another object of external worship is taken up, *viz.*, *Agni* or fire. Like images it has no legs, hands, etc.

It is the nearest approach in the outer physical world to the spiritual effulgence of Ātmā. Moreover Agni-*devatā*—for we believe in consciousness in all objects—is the Lord of the three worlds with which man at present is concerned. It is the physical fire that burns up all objects here and transmutes them to the matter of the higher world. Similarly in Yajñas or sacrifices, it is Agni-*devatā* that is the carrier of the oblations to the higher world.

Then we rise from the external worship to that of the internal. From the standpoint of the physical body of man, the first stage of worship is external to the body; and the second is within the body. Within the body, there is centre after centre, *chakra* after *chakra*, where the contemplation can be carried on. As God is everywhere, he should be as well within the body in every cell. But there are three important centres at which His influence is more felt, since the manifestation of His influence is dependent upon the matter through which he manifests. The more receptive the *Upādhi* or vehicle is, the more is His influence. The three important centres are the heart, the brain and the navel. The heart is the centre of life, since the blood which is life in the body flows out of it for the upkeep of the whole system; the brain is the centre of intelligence; and the navel, the centre of pleasure or bliss. *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*, consciousness and matter are at opposite poles and have arisen out of the one spirit of Ātmā. The centre of *Puruṣa* is the brain out of which arises intelligence; the navel and the parts below it are the centres of pleasure-giving matter. These two, *Puruṣa*

and Prakṛti, are unified as one in the neutral point of the above two, viz., the heart. According to Hindūism, the heart is the seat of Ātmā, the Life. Hence of the three centres the brain, the heart and the navel, the heart is accorded the foremost place. When a frog is decapitated, it yet lives; but it cannot when the heart is injured. Hence in the third stage of internal worship, the heart, the highest of all centres, is taken up for worship.

It is said that man with his body is a picture of the whole universe. He is a microcosm of the whole macrocosm. Just as the sun stationing itself in the centre of the Universe sends forth its rays of light to every nook and corner therein, so also the spiritual Sun of Ātmā being in the centre of the heart sends forth its rays of influence from it to each tiny cell in the body. Not even a microscopic object but lives and shines through His influence. According to Hindūism, the Sun has its own Devatā or Intelligence—as each particle of matter has—but of a very high order. The Astral Purusha is described in the *Chhāndogya-Upanishad* with even a body with golden beard, nails, etc., being of a golden colour from top to toe. I do not know whether modern science endorses the statement made by a scientist a few years ago to the effect that similar beatings of the heart in man, viz., systole and diastole, are taking place in the sun.

Śrī-Kṛṣṇa compares the Jīvātma to the rays of the Sun, viz., Paramātmā and says thus :

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।

“O Arjuna, Īśvara (the Lord) is in the hearts of all creatures.” In the *Chhāṇḍogya-Upaniṣad*, Prapāthaka, viii, begins thus :

अथ यदिदमस्मिन्ब्रह्मपुरे दहरं पुण्डरीकं वेष्म दहरोऽस्मिन्नन्तराकाशस्तस्मिन्यदन्तस्तदन्वेष्टव्यं तद्वाव विजिज्ञासितव्यमिति ॥ १ ॥

‘Now within this Brahmapura (of the human body) there is the dahara ākāś in the lotus habitation ; and within it, there is the inner ākāś. That one within it is worthy of search ; that verily should be inquired after.’

Upaniṣad after Upaniṣad sing their praises of this centre of all centres and urge us to discover that centre. When that centre is realised, it is said in the *Chhāṇḍogya-Upaniṣad* that the three worlds which are as wide as all this Ākāś is will be realised in the heart.

What is that centre in the heart? Why is it that its influence has not been, till now, felt in the general humanity? Taking this physical heart, we find it is like a lotus-bud inverted ; within it, there is a point above its Karṇika or pericarp. It corresponds in the physical body to a plexus called the cardiac plexus. In the higher body, it is called, in Sanskrit writings, Anāhata Chakra. The hundred and eight Upaniṣads throw much information on this topic. It is not for me to dilate upon this subject at this stage. Its influence is not felt in the general humanity on account of the heart being encrusted with emotions and thoughts. The emotions and thoughts in us being living ones, lead us : should they be of the lower kind,

they lead us in the lower path ; should they be of the higher, they lead us in the higher. Ātmā, pure and simple, can lead us only when the Chinese wall of desires and thoughts in our heart is levelled to the ground. Even emotions and thoughts being of Ātmā, Ātmā can lead us, who are attracted to them, through them alone. These emotions and thoughts are like jackals having their voices and lead us through them. Only when we still the laugh and sob of these jackals, can we hear the Ātmā within. Then it is we shall be like Arjuna hearing the voice of Śrī-Kṛṣṇa in the car in the battle. The word Raṭha means car as well as human body. In this car of human body, Arjuna is the Jivātmā or soul and Śrī-Kṛṣṇa, the Paramātmā. So long as the blind of emotions and thoughts interposes between the Jivātmā and the Paramātmā in this body, so long the Jivātmā cannot hear the voice of the Paramātmā. When once the blind is removed, the Jivātmā will be face to face with its parent and hear the voice of the latter in the ensuing battle when it has to conquer its sense of separateness and become one with Paramātmā. Therefore in that priceless little book called *Light on the Path*, it is stated : “Then will come a calm such as comes in a tropical country after the heavy rain when nature works so swiftly that one may see her action. Such a calm will come to the harassed spirit. And in the deep silence, a mysterious event will occur which will prove that the way has been found. Call it by what name you will—it is a voice that speaks, where there is none to speak ; it is a messenger

that comes, a messenger without form or substance ; or it is the flower of the soul that has opened. It cannot be described by any metaphor. But it can be felt after, looked for and desired even amid the raging of the storm."

After the voice is heard through the conquest of emotions and thoughts in the first battle, the further stage is entered upon where a second battle has to be fought with the Self for its mastery, in order that the lower Self may be at one with the higher Self. Again in the beautiful words of *Light on the Path* : "Stand aside in the coming battle and though thou fightest, be not thou the warrior. Look for the warrior and let him fight in thee. Take his orders for battle and obey them. Obey him not as though he were a General but as though he were thyself and his spoken words were the utterance of thy secret desires ; for he is thyself ; yet infinitely wiser and stronger than thyself ; look for him ; else in the fever and hurry of the fight, thou mayst pass him. And He will not know thee, unless thou knowest him. If thy cry reach his listening ear, then will he fight in thee and fill the dull void within. And if this is so, then canst thou go through the fight cool and unwearied, standing aside and letting him battle for thee. Then it will be impossible for thee to strike one blow amiss. But if thou look not for him, if thou pass him by, then there is no safeguard for thee. Thy brain will reel, thy heart grow uncertain ; and in the dust of the battle-field, thy sight and senses will fail and thou wilt not know thy friends from thy enemies."



Therefore in the last stage when we have to reach the All, which is everywhere, perfect surrender and acting up to the instructions of the Lord are the requisites. In the internal worship in the heart, the devotee had rent the veil between himself and the Lord and begun to hear the voice of the Lord therein. He is yet separate from the Lord and has to kill the separateness. His duty is now to obey his words and act up to them implicitly. He is not doing the things of himself but of the Lord. Through such a surrender, he destroys the self and reaches the Lord everywhere. Thus men were led stage by stage to the cognition of That which is everywhere. First they were advised to worship God through an ordinary physical figure which they could easily think. It was a figure called *Pratimā* wrought in a granite stone or wood of a person or being whom they revered greatly. After they had gained a proficiency in that worship, then an image was placed before them which would elevate them from that state to a higher, *viz.*, *Pratīka*. Then the figure was dispensed with and the live-fire which has no hands, legs or any other form was ordered to be placed before them for worship. It was akin to the spiritual light. The figure and Light are *Rūpa* and *Arūpa* or the form-state and the formless state. When through the external contemplation in these two states, the mind had attained fixity, then it was made to turn inwards. Through the practice in the first two stages, the emotions had been stilled. Then they became voiceless in the heart. Therefore in this stage of con-

temptation, there was no veil between the Jivātma and the Paramātmā in the heart; the former being ever guided by the latter in its work in the world, through intense concentration. Then the final goal is reached through perfect surrender. It is then that the all-pervading God is reached.

It is only to kill the Self that the Service of Humanity is being resorted to nowadays. Formerly when men were not sufficiently evolved, it was not possible for a man to practise it on a general scale. This service of humanity will have to vary with each age. Moreover it is only at certain periods of time that it will bear fruit. Hence the wise avail themselves only of certain seasons that are congenial to such a work.

## POWER OF THOUGHT

To those that have had a glimpse into the western world of politics, there is a name very familiar. That name figured some years ago at the head of the Conservative party in Great Britain and Ireland. He was the author of a book called the *Foundations of Belief*. He is none other than Mr. A. J. Balfour. After him, I will put the questions of to-day thus : Is thought a thing in itself apart from the brain or dependent upon the brain alone for its existence? Should thought be one separate from the brain, what is the criterion of distinction between good and bad thoughts? Should good or bad thoughts be sent by one person to another, then will they make or mar his progress? Will these thoughts affect the universe for good or for evil? Lastly I shall enter into the question of thought being at the root of the universe as well as man's body.

Let us first take up what thought is. According to the materialistic physiologists, thought is nothing but a cerebral vibration. Supposing a person sees an object : then the nerve of the eye begins to vibrate. This nerve vibration is carried within the brain to a centre called the third ventricle and stops with it ; so

that the thought of a form is nothing but the vibration of the optic nerve. Similarly each of the other organs has its own nerve through which the vibration is brought about. Hence the above physiologists identified each thought with the vibration of the nerve appurtenant to each organ through which the thought arose. So that when the brain with its nerves ceases to act or exist, there is the cessation of thought. Of late many instances have been adduced to demolish the theory that cerebral vibration alone is thought. In the researches of the Society for Psychical Research, of London, which includes many scientists, are to be found many instances from different departments. The Society sent all over the world their own agents well versed in science to inductively work at the supraphysical field by collecting authentic instances. In that ponderous work of the late Mr. Myers, called *Human Personality*, we find recorded many cases. I shall cite one in each department as a sample of the bulk of instances recorded.

First we shall take up thought transference. Here two scientists are apart from one another at a distance of 100 miles and more. Both agree that, at a certain time of the day, one should will a certain thought which had not been communicated beforehand by the one to the other and imagine it to go to the other's brain while the other should keep his brain passive or vacant, in order that the other's brain may be in a state of receptivity. The latter was able to decipher the thought of the former. In this way many

instances are recorded: One man thinking that a book from a certain almirah be removed to another and the other receiving that thought and wiring that he had done it. What is the logical inference out of this? The brain vibration is one that is not confined to the periphery of the brain alone but may act out of it. In the vibration coming out of one's brain, why it should affect the brain of that other person only? Because the thought was willed by the one to the other and the other had his mind in a receptive condition. When thus thoughts pass and interpass between the two parties, there occurs a wireless intercommunication in the ether between the two brains, as in a wireless telegraph. This is the explanation of love that occurs unexpectedly between two parties; the wireless link between the two brains may have been made in the previous lives even. Instead of attraction being the cause of link, there might have been created repulsion before through the hate of one another, which now asserts itself in fight and quarrel.

We shall next enter into another field—mesmerism or hypnotism, as it is otherwise called. A hypnotiser brings his patient to a somnambulic condition—when his body moves, etc., and he is unaware of the motion—and puts him into a room. Having taken a number of slips of paper of the same dimensions, he wills the image of an object, say a watch, on one of the slips; and having identified in his mind that slip whereon he willed the image of the watch, he mixes all the slips together and hands them over to the somnambulist

who after going through one slip after another identifies the slip whereon the image of the watch was willed and describes its figure. In this case, the vibration produced by the thought of the figure of the watch should have impinged itself upon the slip of paper. There must have been some traces on the paper for the somnambulist to discover the figure of the watch. Was it a mere vibration only? If each thought produces its vibration, how is the thought-vibration of a watch to be differentiated from that of another object? To which the clue is given from the fact that in some cases when the thought-form of the watch is not clearly made in the mind of the hypnotiser, the patient is unable to discover it. Thereby we are led to infer that each thought is not a mere vibration passing from one brain to another but also produces its own image or form. Here I may also refer to Dr. Baraduc of France who is said to have thought upon his sensitivised plates not merely the forms of physical things but also thought-images. In this connection, we may also refer to the photographs made of invisible spirits. How far Dr. Baraduc's searches are admitted by the moderns, we are not in a position to know. Thus the trend of modern thought is towards the admission of thought-producing forms or images, as such terms are being used freely by eminent men in books and journals.

Coming to the east, we find the question of thought has been put in two ways, one for the ignorant and the other for the learned. There is said to be a person named Chitragupta who is the custodian of the

archives of the court of Yama—the lord of Death. No sooner is a soul after death summoned before that high tribunal of Yama than he asks his record-keeper to unroll the tablet whereon are inscribed the good and bad deeds and thoughts of that individual. According to it, the soul is sent to heaven or hell. It means that with the cessation of the brain of one, there is no cessation of his thoughts. The soul will have to be responsible for the thoughts that have been photographed upon the Ākāś or ether. By whom have they been photographed? By Chitrāgupta? This name is composed of the two words: *chitra*, picture and *gupta*, the hider. It is he that is the hider in the ether of all the mental pictures. He is the instantaneous photographer that photographs upon his plate of ether all the thoughts of men, as they rise from their brains. Then passing to the version put forward for the learned, the *Mahābhārata* states that an image arises with each thought. The mind which also is a concrete one composed of subtle matter becomes of the form of each object in which it is engaged and makes a picture-gallery of all its thought-images.

If thus thoughts are things in themselves, persisting even after the death of body emanating them, how are we to differentiate between good and bad thoughts. Let us go to the primal source whence good and bad things arise. When the primal matter arises, there arise its *guṇas* or qualities. They are the three: *Saṭṭva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. Each of these is said to possess a colour. *Saṭṭva* is said to be white in colour, *Tamas* black, and *Rajas* red. How are we to understand them

the modern light? The light that we can perceive through our present senses lies between the maximum and minimum rates of vibrations of 450 and 800 and trillions: so that darkness is either the state below the said minimum and above the maximum. It is admitted by modern science there are higher and lower vibrations of light which our present senses cannot perceive. Though they appear to be darkness, they are but the higher or lower forms of light. That is Tamas. Hence it is said in our Upanishads that out of Tamas or darkness (which is the higher form of light), came the light of our universe—which is but a maximum and minimum vibration of the present universe which is evolving to endless degrees. In a white ray of the manifested universe, there are seven colours which are given out in the Upanishads, of which Rajas or red is the lowest end of the spectrum. It should be remembered that there are many septenary sub-series in this major septenary gamut for a Kalpa. Of these septenary colours, what are good? and what are evil? Generally good may be defined as that which tends towards the onward march of evolution and the evil as that which detracts from it. Taking one septenary scale, the three colours that vibrate at the higher rate may be said to be the good ones; the lower three, the evil ones; the middle or fourth one, partaking of the nature of both. Even the lower three may be said to be good from the standpoint of the still lower septenary scale; while the higher three reputed to be good may be evil from a still higher level. Hence are good and evil said to be relative.



So far as one septenary scale is concerned, we may state that certain colours are good and others are bad. Violet, the highest end of the spectrum is said to be a good one denoting love of a divine order. Supposing one shows Bhakti or devotion to an Ishta-devatā or God, unsullied with Kāma, then a thought-image arises saturated with violet colour. But should that devotion be associated with Kāma or passion, the red colour co-operates with it. So also other colours there are which typify this or that thought. It were well that a book treating on that subject in Theosophy be taken up for study, where it is dealt with *in extenso*.

If we study this question in this light, we shall then be able to understand the meaning of colours not only in the Hindū books but also in the Western. In *Othello*, Iago is made to say: "It is the green-eyed monster jealousy that does mock the meat it feeds on, etc." Why should jealousy be represented as green in colour by Shakespeare? Since he was not, in the opinion of some, an ordinary man who is reputed to have held horses in the Drury Lane theatre, but an occultist who knew the language of colours. If thus each concrete thought produces its own image and each good or evil thought has its own appurtenant colour, then what about those abstract thoughts where no image is made by the mind. In all cases, the good or bad thoughts generate their own colours. Even in the case of abstract thoughts, it is said there are some images formed.

We shall next enter into the effects produced when a thought, directed by one to another, produces a

in the ether between the two. The Hindūs urge the mind becoming of the form of that other gets back its image. Another may urge that the thought-image created by the one goes to that other. However may be the theory held, both admit the link established between the two. Should a good thought be sent, either the mind or thought-image goes to the other surcharged with its appurtenant colour and as the other's Aura or essence be surcharged with colour, *viz.*, that good quality. Hence that other is voluntarily led to a good path. Similarly about evil thoughts. Suppose I send an angry thought to her. Anger being represented by red colour, the other's mind becomes saturated with that colour as all men have anger in a greater or lesser degree. Thereby the angry element in him is increased and he is goaded to do things which otherwise he might not have done. When a deed is done under the influence of that increased anger, both are responsible, not only the doer but also the sender of the thought. The doctrine of contributory negligence, as in Torts, applies to this case. Therefore it is that each person should not send evil thoughts to her for his own sake at least. But should good thoughts be sent, the sender too is profited thereby. What should a thought be sent to a Great Being like a Rshi, what takes place? When a thought is sent to an ordinary person, it does not enter into the essence of the mind of that other; since, in the whole of humanity, the desires are fully rampant. These desires which are represented by

colours form the outer coating of the mind. They form, as it were, the Chinese wall round the mind. When therefore the action of one mind over another takes place, the latter is affected but superficially. The mind which is within is not generally reached. But in the case of the Great Ones like the R̥shis, the outer wall having been demolished, there is the pure mind unalloyed with desires. Hence the mind is reached directly. So that when one thinks of a R̥shi, the mind or thought-image stands as a messenger before the mind of the Great One who at once knows its mission. To illustrate this, let me take an instance from the *Mahābhārata*. It is said that Satyavatī, the mother of Kṛṣṇa-Āvaipāyana Vedavyāsa was asked by her son to think of him whenever she wanted him. So it is said that she thought of him, when she wanted him on one occasion. And we are told that the moment she thought of him, he came. As soon as she thought of him, her mind stood as a sentinel at the gate of Vyāsa's mind and he came. How? In his Māyāvi-rūpa which became concrete in a physical body. For it should be known that the R̥shis are those who stand on the uppermost rung of the ladder of the mind. But supposing an evil thought is sent against a R̥shi, it cannot affect him, since it cannot find a place in him. Hence in reacting, it returns to the very person from whom it emanated as a "reaction along the line of least resistance". In the Hindū religious books are recorded some instances wherein this principle is illustrated. Jadabharata, the Ātma-jñānin who assumed a life of idiocy on account of the blunder committed by

in his previous life, was brought before the goddess for the purpose of being sacrificed to her by the bers on a dead of night, when their intended victim

bolted away. The goddess herself, it is said, bolted out of the image and smote the head of the bers with the very sword with which he wanted to be the head of Jadabharata. This is only an illustration of the fact that any evil thought or action aimed at a Great Being recoils on the sender.

When, instead of an evil thought, a person has a good thought to a Great Being, what occurs? Though it is a line of communication being brought out between the two, the influence or knowledge of the higher one flows to the other. Here we may mention the case of Ékalavya, a hunter who by meditating upon the clay image of Droṇa got the secret knowledge which he alone knew and which he communicated to his favourite and foremost disciple alone, viz., Arjuna. There are other instances where a disciple meditating upon his Guru or Ishta-ātā got all the knowledge and Divine influence of the latter.

Let us now turn our attention to the case where ordinary persons think of one another. Here also in some cases, the transference of thought arises. When two persons are sympathetic with one another, even as loving pairs of man and wife, how does the transference of thought take place between them? Though the desires are not dead in their minds to break through the thought and though the Chinese wall round the mind made up of desires is not demolished, yet

in that wall there is a breach made—temporary or permanent as the case may be—through which the thought is carried from one mind to another. In the case of persons that are not sympathetic with—nay averse to—one another, there is no line existent between the two. In the case of positive repulsion—not merely indifference—there are antagonism and feud brought about, the moment they approach one another.

How do these thoughts affect the universe? This is the next question we have to take up for our consideration. In the *Mahābhārata*, we are told that all wars and epidemics are due to the collective Karmas of the nation. Here it is not due to the individual Karma of one person but the collective Karma of many individuals who bring them about. In the *Āḍiparva*, we have the synod of Indra, R̥shis and other Kārmic agents where the campaign of the forthcoming war is concerted. The war is first enacted in the higher world, ere it takes place in the lower. The physical war is but a duplicate of the higher, where the result had already been brought about. Hence when Arjuna wanted to know from Śrī-Kṛṣṇa how it had already been enacted in the higher world, the Lord showed His Visvarūpa wherein Duryodhana and others had already been swallowed up by him.

Coming to epidemics, we find there also the thoughts have to play their part to bring them about. Modern science is of opinion that each disease owes its origination to certain tiny things floating in the atmosphere

called bacteria, microbes, etc. Each disease has its own bacterium. But how come these bacteria? What is the reason of their difference? Here science has not come to that stage of the ether where the bacteria live and when the proper explanation can be given. According to Hindūism, thoughts are the cause of the generation of bacteria. Let me take up the story recorded in the Vedas and the Purāṇas. Hindūs may be reminded of that Vedic Mantra which they repeat in the yearly Śrāddha ceremonies, ere the Brāhmans are fed. The place where they eat during the ceremony is first purified with a Vedic Mantra when the Māṇḍehas are said to fly away from the place. It begins with मन्देहारुणे द्वीपे. The story is recorded in the *Vishṇu-Purāṇa*, in amsa, ii, 8. A number of Rākshasas called Māṇḍehas, three crores in number lived in an island called Manḍehārūṇa Dvīpa. They made Ṭapas unto Brahmā who appeared before them and asked them the reason of their Ṭapas. They said: "We want to fight with the sun by the day; and though we should die during the day, we should have the power of reviving during the night." This queer request having been granted, these Rākshasas rise to their acme of power during the morning twilight when they fight with the sun; they perish but to again revive in the evening twilight when they resume their sovereignty in the night. Addressing the spiritual class of Brāhmans, the Purāṇas ask them to perform the Gāyatrī at the Sandhyās, so that the mantra may form a thunderbolt to kill these Rākshasas and thus protect the sun. Perhaps anticipating the remissness of the

Brāhmans in doing their duty, they say that even in the case of their non-performance, there are the sixty thousand Vālakhilyas—the Purushas or souls in the form of a thumb in the sun—who will protect it.

Now let us take the ordinary case of cholera bacteria. It is said that one cholera microbe put into a tub or vessel of water at sunset multiplies itself in twelve hours in geometric progression into a number, four times the population of London—say about sixteen millions. How is this prolific growth as well as the mischief arising therefrom, to be arrested? The cholera bacterium is exposed to the rays of the sun and thus deprived of its power of mischief. Such a one is inoculated into a person's body, so that other cholera bacteria may be arrested in their growth in the body; even if they arise, they cannot work out their mischief. It is like one robber in the band of the many being caught, domesticated and made to protect the house and property who, knowing his own kith and kin, prevents his mischievously disposed brethren from invading the household.

Similar is the story on hand. Like the cholera bacteria are Māṇḍehas. The latter flourish like the former in the night and perish or are deprived of their power of mischief through the rays of the sun with the power of again reviving in the evening twilight. How are the Māṇḍehas dealt with in this case? With the power of the Gāyatrī. In the Gāyatrī, it has to be done through the heart which corresponds to the sun in the universe. One of the meanings of the word 'Saviṭuḥ' in the Gāyatrī Mantra

is the sun. When the Arghya is done in the ablution ceremony with water accompanied with the uttering of Gāyatrī, three handfuls of water are taken, saturated with the influence of the spiritual sun in the heart and the universe, and are again let into the general water of a river or tank, so that the Māṇḍeḥas in the rest of the water may be deprived of their power of mischief through the already purified water. As the *Vishṇu-Purāṇa* puts it: 'The light effused by Omkāra becomes radiant and burns up entirely the Rākshasas called Māṇḍeḥas.' Thus the two processes of Bacteria and Māṇḍeḥas are similar.

But what does the word Māṇḍeḥas mean? It is compounded of two words, मन्द evil and ईहा desire or thought. It is our evil thoughts that form these Rākshasas. As one Great Being put it: 'Because every thought of man upon being evolved passes into the inner world and becomes an active entity by associating itself—coalescing we might term it—with an elemental—that is to say—with one of the semi-intelligent forces of the kingdoms. It survives as an active intelligence—a creature of the mind's begetting—for a longer or shorter period proportionate with the original intensity of the cerebral action which generated it. Thus a good thought is perpetuated as an active beneficent power, an evil one as a maleficent demon. And so man is continually peopling his current in space with a world of his own, crowded with the offsprings of his fancies, desires, impulses and passions: a current which reacts upon any sensitive nervous organisation which comes in contact with



their contents unseasonably, doing us mischief thereby. If not, how are we to explain the want or excess of rain? In a year of famine, there is plenty of water in the ocean; there is the sun blazing intensely hot to evaporate. Why then should there be the anomaly of the rain? As to the manner of the formation of clouds, may it be compared to the phenomenon of the water-spout. In the mid-ocean, the mariners find a cone formed with its apex down below. A spiral is formed in the centre, through which dark vapours go up and form clouds; then the cone disappears and the clouds formed above shed rain.

Coming to the last point, Hindūism clearly states that thought is at the root of the universe as well as of man's body. Professor Bergson is said to have stated in his Gifford lectures that the mind is the cause of the body. Similarly Hindūism says that it is Manas that creates the body with which man comes into the world. Just as he has his body through his Manas, so also it is said that Brahmā creates the whole world through his Manas or mind. In the former case, man has his body created involuntarily through his mind. But the Creator does it voluntarily. The *Taittīriya-Upanishad* says :

सोऽकामयत ॥ बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति ॥

Brahmānandavalli, 6.

‘He wished (or willed). May I become many; may I bring forth.’ The *Yoga-Vāsishtha* says that it is the Sāṅkalpa of the mind that creates the body

as well as the universe; and it is Saṅkalpa that destroys. If we go to other religions, there also the same idea figures. In the Greek books we find the Demiurge through the Divine Idea creating all things. Even in the Old Testament, it is said, "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." I do not know what the original word means—that which is translated as 'said'. It might be 'willed' or 'thought'. After the prototype of a mental form was given to the invisible universe by the creator, particles of physical matter aggregated round it to form the physical shape. Thus it was the invisible universe that came into existence before the physical.

According to Śrī Saṅkara each soul of man has tremendous possibilities before it. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva are but the names of the offices held by each soul, as it progresses up to the stage of creation, preservation and destruction of a universe. The soul that is now doing the work of Brahmā or creation was in a far off past period but an ordinary one weltering like us in the mire of Samsāra. Similarly each one of our souls may become a Brahmā or Viṣṇu or Śiva of a universe in some very distant future. Such a lofty position may be attained in this Kalpa, should the soul realise its possibilities even now and endeavour to attain them sooner. Only, if a soul attains that position in this Kalpa through some superhuman efforts, it will possess all the powers incidental to that office but will not be allowed to exercise them. Hence is the Vedānta Sūtra in ch. IV, 4.

जगद्व्यापार वर्जं प्रकर्णात् असन्निहितत्वाच्च ॥

‘Except the work of the universe, (it can have all other powers), according to the Prakaraṇa (context) and being not near to it.’

Hence we find that a soul, according to Hindūism, being an Amsa of God can rise to the fullness of the stature of God, if he will but make up his mind to do it; otherwise he will have to be grovelling in the dust of material things. Though this may seem to be Utopian—or in the distant future even should (one) believe in it—yet it is refreshing, nay elevating, to be told that our souls are not mere poor things, say to be quill-drivers in an office, but have immense possibilities. But there is one thing in this discourse that is capable of practical working even now. Let us know that thoughts are things, and have much power. Let us make a vow to ourselves in the sacred adytum of our heart that whatever others may do to us and however ill they may think of us, our brains shall always think good thoughts only. Then only our heart will become a sacred temple for the Spirit in us; others too will be better off on account of our good thoughts, and the universe will become a paradise instead of the pandemonium it is now. Then as more souls arise with the same good thoughts, our blessed India will revert to the old halcyon days of Śrī-Rāmachandra, Rājārshis and others when peace and plenty, longevity and happiness reigned throughout the land.

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## THE UTILITARIAN CHARACTER OF DIVINE WORSHIP

IN this iron age of ours if a man wishes to embark upon an undertaking, he asks himself: "Shall I gain rupees, annas and pies if not now, prospectively at least, or shall I be dubbed with the title of a Dewān Bahadūr or C.S.I., etc.?" It is right therefore that we should enter into the utilitarian aspect of the worship of God; but it should not be supposed that we are to long after the fruits of such a worship. Should the worship be conducted properly, it will yield its fruits without the worshipper's longing after them. Were he to introduce desires into it, they would become obstacles to his further progress. Hence Śrī-Kṛṣṇa, in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, ch. ix, 22, says:

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

"Whoever worships Me alone without thinking of another (or fruits), I take care of the welfare of such a person ever devoted to Me." If an exercise is taken, strength will naturally accrue to the muscles without one's desiring it.

What is the aspect of the Divinity that should be taken for worship? Regarding this question, Hindūism is very liberal and cosmopolitan. It leaves each person free to adopt the form which appeals to him the most. Should an aspect of Śiva or Viṣṇu, or any other form of the Hindū Divinity appeal to a Hindū, he can take it up. None is required or forced to adopt one which does not attract him. Therefore the *Bhagavad-Gītā* in ch. iv, 11 states :

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।

मम वर्तमानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥

“In whatever form men worship Me, I bless them through it: for all men are following My path in different ways.” Hindūism goes further and says that, God, being in all, no religionist is wrong in the form of worship he may have adopted ; only he should be true to it and be persevering. But it condemns any one who changes his religion, especially a Hindū who has got all aspects of God in his own religion. Therefore the Lord, in ch. xviii, 47, says :

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ॥

“Better that one follow his own Dharma, however ill-conducted, than another's Dharma well-conducted.” In Hindūism especially, there are all phases of worship to be found. Why then should one go to another faith unless for attractions other than spiritual?

What are the benefits derivable from such a worship? They are threefold. Through a properly

conducted worship, the mind is brought under control ; the Divine influence passes to the worshipper from the object worshipped ; and the soul is realised. The mind of man is always flitting from one thing to another. It is compared in the Hindū writings to a monkey or wheel. Just as a monkey runs from one branch to another, never staying at one place permanently, so does the mind flit from one idea or object to another through the laws of association of ideas. Or it may be said to be ever rotating like a wheel.

Suppose a student reads a proposition of geometry ; the moment he thinks of a circle, the mind runs to the similar idea of a circle which his teacher drew on the blackboard in the school on the previous day ; then it thinks of an European gentleman that had visited the school ; then of the place whence he came, *viz.*, England ; then it goes to China and from China to Peru. In this manner, it circumambulates the whole world, while the fingers are handling the book, the eyes are seeing its contents, and the vocal organ is uttering the words. How is this restless monkey of a mind to be caught and tethered to a peg or place ?

On the battle-field of Kurukshetra, this very question was put to our Lord Kṛṣṇa by his devoted disciple in the following lines in the *Gītā*, vi, 34 :

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम् ।

तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥

"O Kṛṣṇa! My mind is fluctuating (like a butterfly), impetuous, hard to control and obdurate, I think it is as hard to curb as the wind."

To which the Lord replied (*Gītā*, vi, 35) :

असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम् ।

अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥

"O man of puissant arms! there is not the least doubt that the mind is hard of control, and fluctuating; O son of Kuntī! it should be controlled through Abhyāsa (exercise) and Vairāgya (indifference to desires)."

Thus then there are two royal roads only to the control of the mind; the one is exercise and the other is bringing the desires to subjection. If we study the mind in its peregrinations, what is the reason underlying its running from one idea to another of a similar or dissimilar character? It is either Rāga or Dvesha love or hate. When one idea arises in our mind another which we loved or hated before arises; thus the mind is led away. Therefore unless all desires of love or hate are controlled, the mind cannot be brought under subjection. Almost the whole humanity is living in this world through and for desires. Should they be asked to give them up at this stage, none will obey His injunctions. Therefore the Lord fully understanding this, prescribed, as the first means of control, Abhyāsa or exercise and as the second, Vairāgya; since without the latter no perfect control of the mind can be had.

What then is the Abhyāsa or exercise? The Lord prescribes some kind of exercise for the mind, just as physical exercise is ordained for the physical body? Suppose a person is too weak in body to do his daily work and applies to his gymnastic instructor for the means of developing strength in his body? The teacher does not say, 'Go on doing your daily work,' but prescribes some kind of physical exercise, such as practising upon the horizontal bars, using dumb-bells, etc. But, when a student is unable to master his lesson through the inattention of the mind, if he should ask his teacher for some remedy, no remedy is given. Regarding this, complaint after complaint is made by the educational authorities at the present day. Even the greatest of them complain of the evils of cramming on the part of students, but they have been unable to remove them. In one of his speeches, Lord Curzon said that the students were like the buddhist Lamas who thought that, by revolving a wheel and saying prayers, they could attain to heaven.

Let us understand the principle underlying physical exercise. In the muscles of each one's body, his strength lies latent. It can be brought forth through friction or through the resistance of another object. Through the physical contact of different parts of the body with other solid objects, the strength in the muscles is educed. Any exercise of this kind, should be done moderately but continuously. If it is done for sometime only and then given up, the full result cannot accrue. If it is overdone as is the



case with impetuous youths, then the muscles will be overstrained and begin to ache ; and the same thing is true of mental exercise. It should be done continuously, not only for a series of years but for a series of births. Mental exercise is rated at a higher worth in this world than physical. A judge working through the strength of the mind is given more salary than a gymnast working through that of his body. Naturally therefore mental exercise should take longer for yielding its results. Generally at the commencement, people overdo their mental practice. They get into trouble and end by giving it up altogether.

Regarding the kind of exercise to be used for the mind, let us understand the different stages of the working of the mind. In the simple instance of a student studying a proposition of Geometry, he tries to make the mind, without wandering from the subject, understand the different stages of the proposition. He understands the logic of one stage from the previous one, and then of all the other stages. It is not enough if he does this alone. After that, if he is asked to prove such and such a proposition in the examination room, he has to remember and reproduce the proofs. Then there is the third stage in which most students find a difficulty. Suppose deduction is put before them for solution. It is not enough merely to be able to remember the proposition. Mere cramming will not enable them to solve the problem ; but they have to reason out and apply the truths of the propositions to the case in hand. Here reason has to play its part.

In Vedānta, these three stages are called Śravaṇa, Maṇana and Niḍīdhyāsa. In the first case, there is the hearing or study and the understanding; in the second case, there is reflection thereon and retaining in the mind. In the third case, he reflects upon it from different standpoints and makes it his own. In Yoga, the three stages are termed Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna and Samādhi. Yoga goes into them at length. They may be applied to the different departments of life.

In this discourse, we are concerned with those simple things that will be suitable to all. In the three stages above described, the student keeps his mind concentrated upon the physical book; in the second stage, the contents of the physical book have to be reproduced by the mind. For that purpose, the student, after reading and understanding the book, has to close it and then try to remember it. Should he not bring it back to his mind, he will have to open the book again and refresh his memory. Of course the process will have to be repeated, till he remembers perfectly. In the third stage, he has to reason out without any physical appliance and through the mind alone. Hence the first stage of the mind being concerned with a physical object may be termed physical; the second stage is partly physical and partly mental and hence may be termed physico-mental. The third stage is purely mental. It is to meet these needs that three stages of worship were prescribed. In the first stage, the worshipper was asked to concentrate his mind upon the physical

image. He went to the Temple morning and even or had his Pūjā at home. Just as a man had physical exercise in the morning and evening, so also worshipper had his mental exercise. Taking physical image of God to which he was most attracted he concentrated his mind upon it from head to foot. Taking first the foot to which he made obeisance : upon which he concentrated, he rose from point to point in that body, till he reached the head. Then mind took the whole image at one view and began to concentrate upon it. Immediately the mind would bolt away from it to some other object which it loved or hated before. It was brought again and again to the same image repeatedly. This has to be done daily at the same time and for the same duration. Should the mind be made to stay at it for a longer time than it can bear, it becomes disturbed. Having been overworked for a longer time one day, it refuses to work the next. Then the mind requires a rest for some days. Moreover the object taken up for worship should be one that produces devotion and love in the person ; otherwise the mind will not like to dwell on it. In order to avoid interruption at the time, a separate place should be allotted to it, when none should enter at the time. The hour at which it should be done is also important. Generally the Sandhis or twilight periods when nature is calm and still were chosen.

When this exercise is continued properly and regularly, then the period of concentration upon the image can be increased. If the mind was originally dwelling on the image for two minutes at the in-

stage, then with practice the concentration can be extended to 3 or 4 minutes, and even more as time goes on. In the second stage of the mind, which I termed the physico-mental, it has to remember the physical contents of the book. After surveying the whole image from head to foot, he now closes his eyes and tries to reproduce the whole image mentally. This is called visualising the image. Those who try to visualise the images of objects, like hypnotists and mesmerists, know the difficulty of doing so. The image as soon as the attempt is made gets blurred or vanishes altogether. Hence the necessity for a physical image. When the mind is unable to visualise, the best way is to refresh the mind by again looking at the physical object with the physical eyes. Those who despise physical images for worship may take note of the fact that the mind requires at first a stationary solid object to think about. It is ridiculous to find persons who cannot even keep the mind fixed at all—for any length of time—despising physical images.

The third stage is where no physical appliance at all is used. Here the mind has to reason out by itself. It was for this purpose that the *Gāyatrī Mantra* was prescribed. In it, we have to rise above all figures, even mental. We have to rise beyond all conditions into the All. Without entering upon the question of what that highest condition is, we may state that, when a person utters the *Gāyatrī Mantra*, he dispenses with all physical forms and goes into pure mental worship. What is the meaning of *Gāyatrī*?

How should it be done? We shall consider this in a separate place.

Besides controlling the mind through mental worship, there is another incidental thing that takes place. Whenever a person thinks of a certain object, the Hindū holds that the mind becomes of the form of that object by making a thought-image of it. Therefore when one thinks of it for a series of years, nay births, a strong link is formed between the person and the object and the thought-image becomes more and more intensified. The mind also, according to Hindūism, is material but only composed of subtle matter. Hence its offspring partakes of the same substance and property as its parent. The thought-image, as it becomes more and more intensified, shows intelligence ; vivified still more by the intelligence on which the worship is carried. The thought-image conducts itself like a guardian angel to the worshipper, and imparts to him advice and instruction. This explains the statements as to some Bhakṭas or devotees having been guided in that manner. In the *Mahābhārata* is recorded the case of a Nishāḍa named Ekalavya who applied to the teacher Droṇa for instructions in military feats. Being refused as a pupil by the teacher, the hunter went to a forest and made a clay image of the teacher and worshipped it. The teacher, who had a number of pupils under him, taught to his foremost one alone, viz., Arjuna, a secret feat of archery that had been communicated to the teacher by his teacher. After it was imparted to Arjuna, he along with his dog went to the forest

where the hunter was worshipping Drona's clay image. The four-legged attendant went into the hunter's hut and defiled with its urine the sacred place of worship. Being angry, the hunter aimed an arrow at the dog which disclosed to Arjuna the fact that the feat of archery which was revealed to him under the seal of secrecy was also known to the hunter. Hearing this from Arjuna, Drona came to the hunter, who informed him that the knowledge of the feat had come to him through the worship of Drona's image. "Nonsense," would exclaim a man of nowadays, condemning image worship. But the fact is that the hunter's constant thought of Drona, with his physical image serving as a reminder, had formed an invisible link between the two, so that a wireless message of secret knowledge had passed to the brain of the hunter. Similarly when a person worships what is called an *Ishta-dēvatā*, a link is formed between the two, which conveys the influence of the *Dēvatā* to the other.

Now about the manner in which "the realisation of the soul" takes place. In Hindūism, the soul is placed above the mind. The mind is ever running to and fro; and so long as it is doing so, the soul above it cannot be realised. When the vagrant character of the mind ceases and it is brought to a standstill, then the soul is realised in its true glory. So long as a boat is tossed to and fro by the wind and the waves, so long the man in it is unable to preserve his equilibrium; only when the boat is at rest, can the man also be still and in peace. Similarly the soul cannot be still and at peace, so long as the mind is

wandering ; but when the mind is stilled, then we know the existence of the soul as a fact.

Thus there are three benefits flowing out of worship. In the first case, the mind is controlled, so that the man becomes a better thinker. By such a remedy all the evils of cramming, complained of nowadays, would be arrested. Even those cases of inattention where the mind cannot dwell on any subject for even a short time would be cured. In the second case, where an *Ishta-devatā* is worshipped there occurs an invisible line of communication between the two, so that the *Devatā*'s influence flows into the worshipper ; and, as the thought-image of the *Devatā* becomes stronger and stronger, it begins to be seen by the worshipper who is guided by it in his everyday life. Thirdly, the existence of the soul which had been looked upon as mere words or theory becomes a fact when the mind is brought under control.

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## THE SYMBOLOGY OF THE HINDŪ TEMPLES

IN Hindūism, the images of God worshipped in temples are generally of a symbolic character called *Pratīkas*; though the lower classes sometimes have *Pratīmās* or ordinary images. Even the Temples in which the images are installed are of a symbolic character. They are not like churches and other places where airy and spacious halls exist. In southern India especially, they have been constructed at a great cost in a quite-out-of-the-way manner. Even the repairs of these temples, done by the *Nāttukkottai Chettis*—who are the Jews or *Mārwāris* of South India—have cost them in most cases twenty lakhs and more; such is the costliness of the temples themselves.

Leaving aside the minor temples which have only one *Prākāra* or aisle, all the temples have either three, or five, or seven. The famous temple at *Srīraṅgam* in the Madras Presidency has seven aisles. Almost all the rest have three, except a few that have five. What is the reason of this? The



body is said to be the Temple of God as is *evident* from the statement in the *Maitreya-Upanishad*.

देहो देवालयः प्रोक्तः ।

The artificial temples of brick and mortar are made in imitation of the natural temple of man's body. The ordinary idea is that man has a soul within this physical body. Hence some temples are made with only one aisle, and the image of God is installed in the middle of it. But man is supposed, by the more instructed, to have more than one body. He is thought to have seven principles; or five kosas or sheaths; or three sarīras or bodies with the Ātmā in them. That is why the temples were built with seven, or five, or three aisles. In Theosophical literature, more information is given as to these seven principles, but Hindūism hints at them. It is said in the *Mundaka-Upanishad*.

सप्त प्राणाः प्रभवन्ति तस्मात्सप्तार्चिषः समिधः सप्त होमाः ॥

सप्त इमे लोका येषु चरन्ति प्राणा गुहाशया निहिताः सप्त सप्त ॥

“From It (Ātmā), the seven Prāṇas arise; the seven lights, (the seven objects of) fuels and sacrifices; all these seven worlds flow from it; all these are located in the abode of the heart; seven, seven (all).” From this, it is clear that man also has seven Tattvas or Principles corresponding to the seven worlds. In Hindūism, these seven are not well explained but the five kosas or sheaths and the three bodies are. They are: Annamaya or food-formed, Prāṇamaya or

Prāṇa-formed, Manomaya or Manas-formed, Vijñānamaya or Buddhi-formed and Ānandamaya or bliss-formed. The three bodies correspond to the three worlds of form with which man is most closely concerned at his present stage. Hence it is that almost all temples in South India have three aisles, which represent the three bodies. Moreover the five kosas are only a different way of dividing the three sarīras.

Concerning sleep, Hindūism says there are three important stages. After the body is tired by working in the waking condition, it goes to sleep. First, its owner experiences the dreaming state called, in Sanskrit, Svapna, and then he enters the condition of Sushupti or dreamless sleep. When the nādis or nerves of the physical body have become relaxed through the work of the day, the Prāṇic currents from the higher sheaths can no longer flow along them. The soul cannot then act on them, just as a fiddler cannot vibrate on the fiddle-strings and produce harmonious sounds, when the strings are loosened. Then the centre of activity of the soul is transferred from the waking state to the dreaming. In the dreaming state too, the soul vibrates upon the nādis, but those are the subtle ones of the Sūkṣhma or subtle body. Then dreams arise in that body which may be either still in the physical body, or out of it but connected with it through the golden line of Prāṇa. As the *Chhāṇḍogya-Upaniṣad* puts it, it flies up into the subtle ether of the second world, like a kite that is made to fly in the skies by means of a string. When

even that body becomes fatigued, there occurs a second transfer of the centre of activity, namely from the Sūkshma or subtle body to a third body called Kāraṇa or causal body. This is composed of the substance of the third world. Being a body above desires and dreams, the third body in which the soul functions produces a state of bliss, associated with the idea of self, which is said to be Ajñāna; the real state of Jñāna is the Turiya or fourth state where self is annihilated and the feeling is one with the All. Then when the two lower bodies, subtle and physical, have been refreshed by the night's sleep, the downward journey of the soul begins. In the early morning, it begins to act on the second body: then dreams are again experienced. After that, the soul acts on the physical body and the man rises from his bed for his daily activities.

In order to understand the formation of the aisles round the image of the God in the centre, two points have to be borne in mind regarding the three bodies. These bodies are made up of materials of different degrees of subtlety. The second body is made up of matter of the second world which is subtler than that of the physical or first world. Similarly the third body is of matter subtler than that of the second world. Just as ether interpenetrates all the solid objects in this gross world, so also the second body interpenetrates the first but also extends beyond it; and similarly the third body interpenetrates but extends beyond the second; just as, when water is turned into vapour, the latter not only occupies

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the space of the water but also extends beyond it, being volatile in its nature. So the three bodies are like three concentric circles, having the same centre. In the centre is Ātmā, the Spirit. They are compared to the inner palace of a king surrounded by three forts. That is why we find the image located in the centre of the Temple, with one, three, five, or seven aisles according to the standpoint from which we look at man's bodies. The one-aisle Temple is for the purpose of representing the Jivātma or Soul in the physical body alone. The three aisles stand for the three sarīras or bodies; the five aisles for the five kośas or sheaths; while the seven principles or ṭaṭṭvas of man are symbolised by the seven Prākāras. In these different aisles, there are big walls constructed with very high spires in the four directions. They are the different gates through which the worshipper has to reach the centre.

Let us now enter into the Garbha-gr̥ha or Holy of holies where the image is kept. Regarding the symbols attached to the images, we shall reserve them for a separate treatment. The images are made of five metals, copper, brass, etc., in order to make them permeable to the spiritual influence that has to flow from the higher realms. Underneath the image is laid a geometrical figure or Chakra, appropriate to the particular deity in the higher realms, since those personages of divine vision that have personal knowledge of the higher realms state that each deity has its appropriate figure. In order to bring down the influence of the deity to the physical state, a counterpart is made in gross matter

of the invisible deity, as he exists in the higher realm. When the figure is first installed, certain rites and ceremonies are done for forty days, and certain Vedic Mantras appropriate to the deity are chanted. By this means, the Āvāhana or invocation of that deity is made in the physical image; the Chakra below serving as a battery from which the spiritual influence flows again and again to the image above. This influence was renewed in former times occasionally through the pūjās or rites done by the Pūjāri or priest of the temple, as well as by great spiritual Beings who sometimes visited the Temples. Even the ordinary worshippers that came to the temple with true devotion not only received divine influence from the image but also added to the influence when they passed out of their bodies through extreme faith. Naturally therefore in order to preserve such an influence, spiritual men alone were allowed to approach the sacred Adytum; and others were allowed to come more or near, according to their different degrees of spirituality. In these days, when the priests themselves that officiate at the sacred precincts are not generally men of good lives, but often breathe out a poisonous influence, the images have lost almost all their influence. As the caste system is not working properly and the Spiritual class of Brāhmaṇas is not really spiritual, all the restrictions and rules regarding precedence, etc., seem now to be unreasonable.

The image, being thus saturated—or supposed to be—with divine influence, is carried about on festive occasions to impart that influence to different places.

A ring of spiritual influence is created by carrying the images along the aisles themselves, within the temples. Similarly they are carried through cities. Different vehicles are used on such occasions for the various images, each having its own. The bull is the favourite vehicle of Śiva, while the Garuda or eagle and Hanūmān or monkey are those of Viṣṇu. The mouse is that of Gaṇeśa and the peacock, of Kārtikeya or Skandā. Other vehicles are also used for the various Gods and Goddesses. Perhaps they are chosen to represent the different Guṇas or qualities of each deity, or sometimes to denote the animals themselves. For detailed information of the Hindū Trinity and the vehicles, the readers are requested to peruse my book called *The Purāṇas in the Light of Modern Science*.

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## PŪJĀ

Two other subjects that I mean to take up in this connection are : (1) Pūjā and (2) The symbolic images. Both of them will prove the fact that our forefathers did not want us to stay in the physical stage alone. Those who cannot go to the higher stage have to content themselves with the physical aspect of worship. But those who can rise are asked to understand the underlying meaning and to ascend to the higher stage. Even in the Pūjā done at home, there is an inner meaning. Each physical act is to be associated with its higher aspect, so that the worshipper may rise to that higher ; and similarly with the images. Let us consider first the ceremonies performed to the images in Pūjā, and then the symbolism of images.

The Pūjā to images is done not only, in temples but in private houses also by some people. For Pūjās in private houses, sometimes a Sālagrāma stone—one of those found in the river Gaṇḍakī in Nepal—is used in lieu of an image, probably because it has some spiritual influence. It has two convolutions of spirals meeting at a point within, which is visible from without through a hole. These spirals are said to stand for “ Vishṇu's Chakra ”.

The *Maṇḍalabrāhmaṇa-Upanishad* deals with the underlying significance of Pūjā. In Brāhmaṇa II, it is stated thus in the original as translated on page 248 of my edition of the *Thirty Minor Upanishads*.

तस्य निश्चिन्ता ध्यानम् । सर्वकर्मनिराकरणमावाहनम् । निश्चयज्ञान-  
मासनम् । उन्मनीभावः पाद्यम् । सदाऽमनस्कमर्घ्यम् । सदादीप्तिरपारामृत-  
वृत्तिः स्नानम् । सर्वत्र भावना गन्धः । दृक्स्वरूपावस्थानमक्षताः ।  
चिदाप्तिः पुष्पम् । चिदग्निस्वरूपं धूपः । चिदादित्यस्वरूपं दीपः । परिपूर्ण-  
चन्द्रामृतरसस्यैकीकरणं नैवेद्यम् । निश्चलत्वं प्रदक्षिणम् । सोऽहंभावो  
नमस्कारः । भौतं स्तुतिः । सर्वसंतोषो विसर्जनमिति । य एवं वेद ॥

“Not being troubled by any thoughts of the world then constitutes the *dhyaṇa* (meditation). The abandoning of all Karmas constitutes the *Āvāhana* (invocation of God). Being firm in the unshaken (spiritual) wisdom constitutes the *Āsana* (posture). Being in a state of Unmani (above the mind) constitutes the *pādyā* (offering of water for washing the feet of the image). Preserving the state of *Amanaska* (when *Manas* or mind is offered as a sacrifice) constitutes the *Arghya* (usual offering of water as an oblation). Being in a state of eternal brightness and shoreless nectar constitutes the *Snāna* (bathing). The contemplation of *Ātmā* as present in all constitutes (the application to the image of) Sandal. The remaining in the real state of the *Dr̥k* (spiritual eye) is the worshipping with *Akshata* (uncrushed rice). The attaining of *Chit̥* (consciousness) is the (worshipping with) flower. The real state of *Agni* (fire) of *chit̥* is the *dhūpa* (burning of incense). The state of the sun



of Chit is the Dīpa (light waved before the image). The union of one self with the nectar of full moon is the Naivedya (offering of food, etc.) The immobility that state (of the ego being one with all) is the Praḍa shiṇa (walking in a circle round the image). The conception of 'I am He' is the Namaskāra (prostration). The silence then is the Śtuṭi (praise). The all-contentment (or serenity) then is the Visarjana (giving leave to god or finishing the worship. This is the worship of Ātmā by all Rājayogins). He who knows this knows all." There are other ceremonies which are left unmentioned in the above but which the commentator mentions. They are the clothing of God and the waving of the light called Nīrājana. The cloth is said to be the Āvaraṇa or screen: the latter is said to represent the idea 'I am the self-shining'. Perhaps the original may have omitted them on account of their comparative unimportance or they may not have been introduced, until after the Upanishad was written.

In all the religious karmas or actions of Hindūism the Hindūs have always prescribed a double mode. The physical actions had their own higher meanings. The object of the Institution of Karma was to elevate men from a lower stage to the higher and not to make them, as people suppose, to grovel in the dust of matter. In the above text, the sixteen Karmas of the Pūjā are given their higher meanings. Two more are added to the above list by a commentator, viz., the clothing of the image which represents the Āvaraṇa or screen of matter and the Nīrājana or the waving

of the light before the image which, according to the above commentator, is the idea 'I am the self-shining'. With the addition of the above two, we have the number 18. The above numbers 16 and 18 are significant. The former number pertains to the Jīvātma; while the latter to Paramātmā. The Jīvātma is said to be Shodasa-Kalā or sixteen-rayed; the universe is said to be eighteen-phased, as will be evident from the number 18 playing its part in the *Mahābhārata*. The worshipper has to retire from the external world—nay from the external house—to the room set apart in it for worship. Similarly there is its mental counterpart. He has, in entering into that room, to exclude then from it all the thoughts of worldly avocation. No worldly worries should then haunt him. This is called Dhyāna. After thus making a shell about him in which he is proof against all worldly thoughts, he then goes into the positive working of that spiritual action in which he wishes to be engaged. This is the Āvāhana or invocation of God, *i.e.*, he wills his devatā to descend into the image before him, so that the spiritual influence may flow through it. Thereby all Karmas are abandoned but the one in which he is to be engaged. Then he goes into an Āsana or posture physically, which means that his mind will not be allowed to wander from the Devatā before him. He will be firm in that posture in the spiritual wisdom of that Devatā.

Then follow three stages of water ceremony, *viz.* Pādya, Arghya and Snāna. They are the washing, with water, of the feet of the image, the sprinkling of

water over it from the head downwards and the bathing of the idol. After one takes up an image for concentration, he falls at its feet, then raises his eyes or mind upwards to the head and then thinks of the whole irrespective of any portion of the body. Similarly in these Karmas done with water to the image, the first one pertains to its feet; then to the head upwards; and then to the whole body. The mental counterpart of Pādya is said to be the state of Unmanī—viz., above Manas or mind—when the mind is surrendered to the feet of the Lord and is one with Him. Losing its separate existence, he becomes Amanaska or without mind in the second state of Arghya. In Snāna, it gets 'the state of eternal brightness and shoreless nectar'.

Then arise three—or four according to the commentator of clothing—applications to the image which are solid things. They are Sandal, Akshaṭa or broken rice and flower. As even the image in its mental or subtle state has a form, hence these solid things of form are given. But then the causal body being of an oval form, here we have a solid oval thing. After the body is cleansed, we get the scent of Sandal which is said to be the contemplation of Ātmā in all. Then the Akshaṭa or rice is the oval form representing the causal body. Its vāsanā or odour is represented by the flower which is the attaining of Chit.

Then we rise to the Jīvātma itself which has no form but is Jyotiṣ or effulgence. Hence we have here certain Karmas in which light plays its part. They are Dhūpa, Dīpa and, if the

commentator's category, be taken into account Nīrājana. Dhūpa is the burning of incense. Both Dīpa and Nīrājana are the waving of lights before the idol.

Then the food is offered to the image which is called Naivedya. According to the Upanishad, the food is symbolical of the full moon, since a man is said to get his s̄anti in the moon, as the worlds are merged into the moon. Hence the Upanishad says : 'The Union of oneself with the nectar of the full moon is Naivedya.' Then follow three actions as going round the image, prostrations to it and the praise. Pradakṣiṇa or going round the image is to be immobile in that state; the conception 'I am He' is Namaskāra. The silence then is the Śtuṭi (praise). The more the man offers his prayers externally, the more has the soul to be passive or silent within, in order to become merged into the Lord. The final or closing scene is the Visarjana or giving leave to God. From the higher standpoint, it is said to be the all-contentment or serenity then. Having made his soul merge into the Paramātmā and got all His influence, he comes back into the world to do His work, strengthened with all His serenity, power and wisdom. This is the real meaning of all the Pūjās. Unfortunately even persons who are doing the Pūjā with great devotion do not do them with a proper understanding of all the Karmas they are doing. They may intently contemplate upon the Ishta-devatā; they may even get influence from it. But the many Karmas that are done in the Pūjā are done from a

physical standpoint only. The result is that there is not that gradual and scientific scaling from one stage to another. In the Pūjā as already stated, the worshipper, as the physical actions are done, has to rise from the physical to the subtle, from the subtle to the Kāraṇa, then from the Kāraṇa to the Jīva condition; then from the Jīva to Paramātmā. Thus as both the physical and mental pūjās are done for many years, nay for many births, the worshipper finds the physical actions unnecessary—nay as a clog—and then dispenses with it. Then he has the mental actions alone; and then rising above the Manas, he reaches the Jīva and then Paramāṭmic condition.

In temple worship too, we have already found the temple is but a symbol of the body. The temple is man-made and artificial: but the human body is God-made and natural. The worshipper has to rise from the artificial temple to the natural. Having thus contemplated upon the artificial temple, he in a later stage goes into the natural, *viz.*, his body and then out of it.

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## NĀRĀYAṆA ON THE WATERS

HINDŪISM is replete with symbols. I do not propose to go into them all as I have dealt with them, *in extenso*, in my book on the Purāṇas. I shall take up here one Praṭika alone as an illustration.



Hindūs are familiar with a picture often hung up on their walls, representing Nārāyaṇa<sup>1</sup>—Mahāviṣṇu—in a recumbent or sleeping posture amid the vast waters and lying upon the folds of Ādiśeṣha, the serpent

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<sup>1</sup> In the above woodcut, the conch and the wheel should be represented on the shoulders.

with its hood over the Lord's head. From His navel, a long lotus-stalk issues with a lotus above and Brahmā, the four-faced creator, seated on it. The Purāṇas also make mention of Him as sleeping on the bed of the serpent and rising from it at the dawn of time and soliloquising to himself—'Whence am I?' etc.—after which He creates Brahmā through His navel. What is the significance of this? The first clue to its interpretation may be had from day and night. According to Hindūism, the Universe is not one that arose for the first time some millions of years ago. As the substratum of matter is indestructible, though it may change its form or condition, the universe composed as it is of matter cannot be thought of as having any first beginning. It is अनादि—without beginning. It only changes its form and condition. In the night of the universe, it is latent and at rest in a higher condition; in the day, it is patent and working. Thus it is ceaselessly alternating between activity and rest, Kalpa and Pralaya. In the state of night therefore, the consciousness presiding over the universe was merely asleep, since no matter can be divorced from consciousness. When the night was over, at the dawn preceding the new day, Nārāyaṇa rose from his sleep and generated Brahmā, the creator, out of himself, in order that Brahmā might create the universe. The word Nārāyaṇa comes from two roots—नारं meaning waters and अयनं, sleeping or lying. He is one that lies on the 'waters' of space. In the Śānti parva, Bhīṣma interprets the word 'waters' as space itself. In the correlation of the worlds with

Tattvas, we may make Pṛthivī to correspond to the first world and āpas to the second world. When, at the dissolution of a universe, the first world becomes merged into the second, it passes into the space of the second which is what may be called liquid space, as opposed to the solid space of the first world. We may also take Āpas to be the physical waters themselves, when a minor pralaya or deluge takes place in the physical world.

After the night is over, Nārāyaṇa wakes up at twilight and generates all not "out of nothing" but out of the materials that are in himself. When the whole universe is absorbed in him, what is left? Ordinary pictures are misleading, for they represent many things which should not be included. The real things that should be there are Chakra, the wheel and Śaṅkha, the conch on the right and left shoulders. I have already made mention of the serpent couch and what issues from his navel. Lakshmī, his wife, Nārada and others came into existence later on and should not be represented at this stage. Lakshmī was born out of the milky ocean later on. Kant analyses all into the three ideas—time, space and causality or consciousness. It is these three alone that exist at the time of pralaya. Time is represented by Ādiśeṣha, the serpent; causality or consciousness, by the wheel; space or matter by the conch.

What is time? Is it the day of twelve hours and the night of equal duration? No. Since at the North Pole light and darkness reign each continuously for six months, the days and nights being reckoned there by



the six months of our time. But, if a person could rise above the law of gravitation, and fly like a bird towards the sun, basking ever in the sunlight, he would lose the two concepts of darkness and light. What then is time? Herbert Spencer defines time as the sequence of events; when one event follows another, then such a sequence is time. But is time lost in pralaya or deluge, when no sequence occurs? According to Hindūism, time is called Ananta or without end. It is eternal. It is called also the Ādiśeṣha or primeval remainder. When the whole universe is merged into pralaya, time ever remains; and it is time that causes the universe to be so merged. Also, it is said to be the śakti or power of God that breathes forth the universe into existence and inhales it back into Him, since the non-dual Absolute is above all action. This is represented in symbology by a serpent, in the form of a circle and with its tail in its mouth. Therefore in the pralaya state, when Śiva (the Destroyer) and his material consort prevail, the serpent figures as a round bracelet on the hand of Pārvaṭī, His consort and as a garland on the shoulders of Śiva. But when the universe is made manifest, space, which had remained *in statu quo* or motionless before, is now agitated; then one wave succeeds another in space; then is caused the sequence of events which produces or is the concept of time in space or conditioned time.

In the representations of this conditioned time, Nārāyaṇa is made to lie on the folds of Ādiśeṣha, with its hood over His head. If we study the folds

and hoods of the serpent in an ancient temple like that at Śrīraṅgam, we find the folds are less than three and a half, while the hoods are five in number. What is the significance of these? In this day of Brahmā when the manifested form-universe exists, we are said to be in the Vaivasvata-Manvanṭara. Each day is said to have fourteen manvanṭaras, of which we are in the seventh. Though we are in the seventh, the *Bhagavad-Gītā* states four Manus to have appeared already. It is said in chap. x, 6.

महर्षयः सप्त पूर्वे चत्वारो मनवस्तथा ।

मद्भावा मानसा जाता येषां लोक इमाः प्रजाः ॥

‘The ancient seven great Ṛshis and the four Manus were born of My nature and mind: of them, this race was generated.’ Why is this? Each period is said to be a Round; one Manu has to start it and another to close it. Thus three Rounds have been completed; and the fourth period was ushered into existence by the seventh Manu, Vaivasvata. In this last period, we are said to have passed twenty-eight mahāyugas and to be in the Kaliyuga of the same. Each manvanṭara has 71 mahāyugas and each mahāyuga is composed of four yugas, namely, the Kṛta, the Tretā, the Dvāpara and the Kali. Hence in the fourth round, we have passed 28/71 of the same. Hence in this day of Brahmā, we have passed 3 28/71 rounds or 3 2/5 Rounds nearly. Therefore the serpent is represented with three coils and a fraction of one. What about the five hoods over the Lord’s head? In the Purāṇas, the

serpent is said to be thousand-hooded. Why should it be here five-hooded? The Hindū writings make mention of seven *dvīpas* or islands, of which the *dvīpa* we are living in is the fifth and is called *Jambū*. These *dvīpas* are the different portions of this earth that have emerged out of the ocean at different periods for human beings to live in. When one portion of the earth is overwrought, it gives way, by submerging into the ocean, to another which arises out of the earth. Thus four *dvīpas* have arisen and disappeared; the fifth being the one we are now living in. The fifth will be replaced at the end of the current *Kaliyuga* by the sixth, which again will be supplanted by the seventh; after the disappearance of the last, the evolution on this earth will be over. To represent the five *dvīpas* and the five root-races of humanity thereon, the five hoods are there over the Lord's head.

Now for the wheel and the conch. They stand for consciousness and matter, *Purusha* and *Prakṛti*. Like the wheel, the thinking faculty is ever rotating. The conch produces sound; according to Hindūism, there are the five *Mahābhūtas* or great elements which originate matter and of which *ākāśa* is the highest. This *ākāśa* has sound as its *tanmātra* or rudimentary property. Hence the conch which produces sound was taken as the symbol of matter. Of these two, *Purusha* or consciousness is the active one and the other, the passive one. Hence the wheel is made to be on the right shoulder and the conch on the left shoulder of *Nārāyaṇa*. They are inseparable from one another,

and are therefore placed equally on the two shoulders.

If we study the *Rāmāyaṇa*, we find these three viz., time, space and causality, represented through means of stories instead of symbols. Of the three brothers of Rāma, Lakshmaṇa stands for time, Bharata for consciousness, and Saṭrughna, for matter. As time is the law of God, the law cannot be separated from God. Hence Lakshmaṇa is always associated with Śrī-Rāmachandra; whether at home or in exile they are never apart. Even Sītā, the wife, is separated from her husband for a time, but Lakshmaṇa never. As time is the servant of God, manifesting the universe and drawing it back to Him, so also Lakshmaṇa is made to do all the behests of his Lord. It was he who built the Parṇasālā or cottage of leaves for the Lord, and he who did all the rest of His work. As Puruṣa and Prakṛti, Bharata and Saṭrughna were together, in their maternal grandfather's house, and together, when the incidents of Śrī-Rāma's exile took place. Together they returned, and, after Bharata had taken his mother to task, together they went to the Chiṭrakūta hills. Meanwhile Lakshmaṇa seeing from a distance volumes of dust raised in the skies, climbed up into a tree to find out the cause, and observed Bharata and Saṭrughna approaching. Both brothers fell at the feet of Śrī-Rāmachandra, Bharata requesting the Lord to return and reign over the kingdom, and the other imploring the lord to return and enjoy the things therein, as consciousness and matter should play such parts. Then the Lord

asked Bharata—to reign as consciousness alone can reign and not matter—and Bharata begged of the Lord his sandals, by virtue of which he might reign over the Lord's Kingdom. Then both returned to Nandigrāma, and there Bharata reigned along with his brother Śaṭrughna, worshipping the Sandals.

In the above story, we find Lakshmaṇa always associated with the Lord and working under Him, as time is the law of God inseparable from Him. Bharata and Śaṭrughna, who stand for Puruṣa and Prakṛti are inseparable from one another. Bharata standing for the higher consciousness as opposed to his mother, Kaikeyī (from *Kai*, the brain) representing the brain or lower consciousness, reigns not by virtue of his own right but as a servant of God by virtue of the dust of God's feet—here represented by His wooden shoes. Here is a great lesson to be learned by every spiritual man, namely, that he is reigning over his family kingdom only as a servant of God.

Then, turning our attention to the navel, we find a long lotus-stalk issuing, with a lotus above and Brahmā the creator seated on it with four heads. In the navel is located according to Hindūism a mysterious force called Kuṇḍalinī which has the power of creating or undoing things at will. It is through this force in His navel that Mahāviṣṇu projects the lotus of the Universe with the lotus-stalk linking the navel and the lotus. Lakshmī, his consort, was then not present and arose in the sea of milk later on. In the svapna or dream, the subtle body comes out of the physical through the navel. As said above, the *Chhāṇḍogya-Upaniṣad*

compares it to a kite flown in the air by means of a string. The string in the body is the Prāṇic cord. Here it is the lotus-stalk which is full of holes or tubes, through which the Prāṇa or life-current flows from the higher to the lower state.

Regarding the universe, the two symbols used in Hindūism are the egg and the lotus. It is called the Brahmāṇḍa or Brahmā's egg; also Kamala or lotus. In the lotus are the different layers of petals, standing for the worlds. Each layer is composed of petals standing for the worlds or sub-worlds, therein. The lotus is red in colour on account of the Rājasic or Kāmic tendency. When it becomes pure, it is Sāttvic or white in colour. Similarly Brahmā is represented as red in colour. His four faces are said to represent the four Vedas. But what are the Vedas? They are said to be Śabda or sound. The efficacy of the Vedas lies in their sound vibrations. According to Herbert Spencer, the world has quadruple rhythms. Perhaps, when the next or fifth Round arrives, Brahmā may have five faces.

Thus therefore the Praṭika of Nārāyaṇa on the Serpent is not one symbol alone but a series of symbols which are called emblems. Hindūism is full of such symbols. It is for the learned to enter into such symbols and to unravel their mysteries. We have to elevate the concept of God through these symbols and not to degrade it. The unfortunate blunder committed nowadays is that even men learned in the Śāstras do not take the trouble to go into the underlying significance of these symbols and enlighten people

about them. Thus most Hindūs are left in the dark about the higher things.

From this, it must not be supposed that the physical representations are of no use. They are useful for worship for those that cannot comprehend the higher things. Those whose brains cannot comprehend the abstract side have to content themselves with the concrete. It is useless—nay harmful—to disturb the simple faith of the ignorant, but those whose brains are developed should rise to the higher. Man has two aspects—the body or the form, and the soul, the not-form. Similarly all things in nature have their two aspects. The form aspect of Nārāyaṇa is a really existent one, from the lower standpoint; but from the higher, He can be contemplated from His abstract side.

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## THE AGNI OR FIRE

THE followers of the prophet Zoroaster—the Parsees take a special object, viz., the fire for their worship, in order to reach God. But the Hindūs have many objects, nay, every possible object. In doing so, they take first solid immobile objects and then mobile ones. They begin with stationary objects of form; then go up to fire which is moving and formless. But people who disapprove of images condemn them and go in for fire-worship alone. Let us study the mind and we shall find our forefathers were wise in beginning with images. The mind of man is always bent upon finding out the relationship of objects, nay, it is said to be relationship itself. In doing so, two things are necessary for it at the initial stages. All the objects of the world should not be placed before it at one and the same time; they should be stationary and not fleeting. When the mind has to analyse objects through the organ of sight, a few sets of objects only should be placed before it, so that it may compare between them; otherwise it will be confused. When a lightning flash vibrates at a higher rate than the eyes can bear, they become blinded. Hence in the early stages solid objects only were placed before the mind for



worship ; and later, the fire which is ever oscillating to and fro with the faintest wind that blows.

In all the three worlds, the Agni or fire is the highest. In order to truly understand it, we may look at it from the two standpoints of the Vedas and the Purāṇas. Let us first understand it in the light of the Vedas. The fire is said to be one of the Divine Beings in the presence of Brahmnā, the Creator. As the Revelation of S. John puts it, he is one of the seven lights burning the seven candle-sticks before the throne of God. Perhaps the candle-sticks represent the body and the light, the consciousness of the seven higher beings. According to Hindūism, there are five Mahābhūtas or great elements, Ākāś, Vāyu, Agni, Āpas, and Pṛthivī as well as Ahaṅkāra and Maḥaṭ. Each is presided over by an intelligence of a very high order. Each world is presided over by one of them, and the third world has Agni as its Devatā. The Svarloka being tenanted by the Devas, Agni Devata is said to be the priest of the Devas and the great Sanātana Puruṣa. "He is an immortal, having taken up his abode amongst the mortals as their guest : he is the domestic priest—the successful accomplisher and protector of all ceremonies. He is also the religious leader and preceptor of the Gods." He is said to be the mouth and the tongue or Vāk (power of speech) of the Devas. The gross food of the physical world is ground by His mouth and rendered invisible ; While the power of speech articulates in this gross state the invisible thoughts of the mind. Hence the fire has

the power of rendering the visible invisible, the invisible visible. Fire therefore is said to be the messenger of the Devas. He takes the oblation from this visible world to the celestial world. In the *Putrakāmeshti* sacrifice of King *Daśaratha*, it was *Agni-Deva* that brought the *Pāyasa* or liquid substance from the higher world to the gross through the fire and gave it to the King.

If an intelligence presiding over fire be thus admitted, then we can understand the way in which it can appear in a physical body. In the *Mahābhārata* is recorded the story of the *Agni-Deva* assuming a *Brāhmaṇa* body and invoking the aid of *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* for the purpose of doing away with the noxious creatures inhabiting the *Khāṇḍava* forest. Readers of Theosophical literature know full well that *Jīvanmukṣas* living in the *Arūpa* planes of the third world, when they wish to show themselves on the physical plane, first manufacture a form by will power on the lower third or *rūpa* plane. An Astral form in the second world is next produced, and then on that a physical form is moulded. In the same manner does the Lord of the third world manifest himself in the gross world. This is seen in the *Māyāvi-rūpa*.

Let us consider the account of *Agni* given in the *Purāṇas*. Here the story begins with a day of *Brahmā* when the three worlds are originated and when the third world first arises. *Agni* is called *Agni-abhimānin* or the *Puruṣa* identifying himself with or presiding over fire. As he is of the highest or seventh world, he does not arise out of any womb,

though his wife does, as she represents the material aspect of fire. His wife is Svāhā, being one of the daughters of Dakṣha and his wife Prasūti. Svāhā is from two words *sva*—self and *ha*—taking. She is one that takes or draws unto herself all the things of the three worlds. Three sons they have: Suchi, Pavamāna and Pāvaka. Each of these three sons has five sons. Thus it is said, there are 49 or 7<sup>2</sup> fires. The words Suchi, Pavamāna and Pāvaka mean the pure, the purifier and the purified. They are the fires of the three worlds. The first, which is fire in its primitive purity, pertains to the third world and is called the heavenly fire. The second is of the second world and is called Astral fire; and the third is of this physical world. These three fires, from another standpoint, may be taken to mean the three fires of this physical world, viz., (1); the solar fire, (2), the fire produced through Maṭhana or churning—that is, through friction; and (3) the electrical fire.

Regarding the mode in which it was brought down from the third world, there is a story occurring in the *Mahābhārata*. There was a Ṛshi named Bhṛgu who had a wife by the name of Pulomā. A Rākshasa by the name of Puloma had made love to her before, but was foiled in his endeavours, as she married Bhṛgu. Hence he was waiting for an opportunity to carry her off. Bhṛgu, who knew this, made Agni, the fire he was worshipping, to look after her in his absence, she being then pregnant. Availing himself of this opportunity, the Rākshasa walked off with her and was just rising up into the sky, when Ṛshi Bhṛgu

returned and wrested his wife from the Rākshasa's hand. As he did so, the child slipped from her womb and was therefore named *Chyavana*, the fallen. Thereupon, it is said, Bhṛgu cursed Agni to be born on earth and swallow things, pure or impure. Similarly there is the Greek legend of the fire coming down to earth in Pandora's box. These stories refer to the period when the higher fire came down to this physical earth. Rshi Bhṛgu through his curse willed it to take place. This accounts for the fact of the Hindūs exposing even dead bodies to fire; whereas the Parsees think of *Suchi*, the pure heavenly fire alone and will not desecrate it with any impurity even on this physical earth.

Man's body being a counterpart of the universe, he also has these fires in him. The three centres in him corresponding to the three worlds are the navel, the brain and the heart. In these three centres are the three fires called *Koshthāgni*, *Ḍarsanāgni* and *Jñānāgni*. Only when the *Jñāna* fire in the heart arises, are all impurities burnt up, and *Ātmā* is realised. The brain fire expresses itself through the eye; hence it is called *Ḍarsanāgni*, or sight-fire. When an object is perceived at a distance, it is said that ether is the medium through which vision operates. According to Hindūism, even ether or *Ākāś* is not homogeneous but is filled with particles of a subtle nature; and in order that the link between them may take place, it is the *Ḍarsanāgni* that issues from the eye and produces the link. Regarding the physical fire, it too may be divided into three. The first and the

most physical is called the Koshthāgni or digestive fire; the second is the kāmāgni or kāma fire which generates offspring; and the third is the highest fire, *viz.*, the Kuṇḍalinī. Each of these fires has five subdivisions—one for each of the five elements. Thus we have 49 sub-fires even in the lowest physical fire.

The same principle holds good in the Yajñas or sacrifices. They were meant to typify these fires and to create a link between the fires in the universe and the fires used in the sacrifices, thus giving a practical illustration of the existence of the former and of the benefits derivable from them. In the sacrifices, there were constructed four fire-pits; one was called Brahmā and the others, Gārhapatya, Āhavanīya and Anvāhārya. They correspond in the body and the universe to the three fires mentioned above. The Gārhapatya is the household physical fire; while the two others correspond to the fires of the eye and the heart. It is from the Brahmā fire-pit where the first fire is created, that the other fire-pits are supplied; and it is into that Brahmā fire again that, at the close of the sacrifices, all the fires are refunded.

चत्वारि श्रद्धात्रयोऽस्यपादाः द्वेऽर्षे सप्तहस्तासोऽस्य ॥

In the above celebrated passage in the Vedas, the fire is represented as a Puruṣa having four horns, three feet, two heads and seven hands. The fact of the Deva having three feet and two heads has already been explained. His two aspects, positive and negative

are called in the Purāṇas Agni-abhimānin and his wife Svāhā. These two have three sons in their own world as well as in the two worlds, Bhūh and Bhuvah. Thus they are said to plant their three feet in the three worlds.

In the *Chhāṇḍogya-Upanishad*, the fire of a lamp in this physical world is said to have three aspects. In Prapāthaka VI, khaṇḍa iv, we have the following :

यदग्ने रोहितं रूपं तेजसस्तद्रूपं यच्छुक्लं तदपां यत्कृष्णं तदन्नस्यापागादग्ने-  
रभित्वं वाचारम्भणं विकारो नामधेयं त्रीणि रूपाणीत्येव सत्यम् ॥ १ ॥

“The redness of Agni is due to heat ; its whiteness to water and its darkness to earth : hence Agni ceases to be Agni. It is nothing but a word : it is an effect and is nominal. Its three forms are alone true.” If we observe an ordinary physical light burning in a wick, we see these three—earthy substance which is emitted as a dark carbon (smoke) : its white light due to the Āpas aspect : its red light being due to the fire proper. Thus is even the physical fire analysed by the teacher Uddālaka in his teaching to his disciple Śvetaketu.

Now to explain the seven aspects and the four horns. In the *Mundaka-Upan.* (ii, 4), there is a mention made of the seven aspects of fire ; but they are described as the seven tongues of fire. The passage runs thus :

काली कराली च मनोजवा च सुलोहिता या च सुधूम्रवर्णा ।  
स्फुलिङ्गिनी विश्वरूपी च देवी लेलायमाना इति सप्तजिह्वाः

“The seven flickering tongues of fire are Kālī (the black one), Karālī (the terrific one), Manojavā (swift as the mind), Sulohitā (the very red one), Sudhūmravarṇā (of purple colour), Sphulinginī (emitting sparks) and the Visvarūpī (all-shaped) Goddess.” Thus it is said in this Upanishad that there are seven aspects, and their names are given. But if we turn to the *Prasna-Upanishad*, we find that of the five Prāṇas there is one Prāṇa which emits seven ‘Archis’ or flames. It is the Samāna vāyu which, in digesting the food and circulating the chyme to all parts of the body, breathes these seven flames. Also Patañjali, in his Yoga-Sūtras, mentions that, if samyama be made upon Samāna, the flame becomes visible in the body.’ The sūtra runs thus : समाननयात् प्रज्वलनं ।

In the Purāṇas, Agni is said to be borne in a chariot drawn by red horses, and the seven winds are the wheels of his car. Regarding the four horns of the fire, there is greater difficulty felt in its explanation. In the Upanishads, the Agni-ṭaṭṭva is derived from the Vāyu-ṭaṭṭva. The latter is stated to be of the figure of a solid hexagon, while the former is given the figure of a solid triangle, viz., Tetrahedron. Though both these elements are solid figures as elements in the higher ether, yet, if we regard them as plane figures, we find the triangle in the hexagon both above and below the square which is in the middle. To the Pṛthivī-ṭaṭṭva, a four-sided solid figure is generally assigned.

Thus it may be that the four horns represent the Pr̥thivī-ṭaṭṭva on which, or below which, the Agni-ṭaṭṭva as a triangle is seated in the higher world.

If thus the underlying principles regarding fire and its subdivisions are borne in mind, then the different descriptions of the different fires in the Hindū writings will be easily understood. The *Mahābhārata* gives them certain names, while other books give others. They are all from the different standpoints of the universe, man's body and the Yajñas or sacrifices. Chemical union of two opposites produces heat. So when a Hindū man and wife are joined together in holy wedlock, the union takes place before fire. This fire is kept up till death, when it is used in disposing of their bodies. Then this fire is transmuted into the heavenly one, when the couple reach the heaven-world where they are knit together through the same process. It is the same fire that brings them back to the physical world. Thus is fire the most sacred of all to a Hindū as well as to a Parsee.

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## THE HEART

WHEN thus, during a long course of training extending perhaps over a series of births, the mind is brought fairly under control, then does man realise himself as the soul in the body. Even before such realisation takes place, he becomes pretty certain, intellectually at least, of his being the soul and not the body. Then it is that he begins to practise internal worship. In such a worship, there are three important centres, not to speak of others. They are the head, the heart and the navel. The head and the navel which are at the opposite sides of the human body are unified in the heart. For the perfect man, the development of all centres is necessary. Hence the Yogins work at them all for mastery. But the ordinary Bhakṭa, whose whole progress rests on devotion alone, makes his heart pure and renders manifest the Ātmā in it. He is indifferent to the knowledge of the brain. He is indifferent to the powers of the navel. He wants to be all in all—nay one—with the God within the heart. That is the reason why all the Hindū religious works make mention of the heart as the most sacred seat. In the physical body, there is said to be the cardiac plexus in the heart. Corresponding to this physical

centre, there is said to be a higher centre in the subtle body whence the spiritual influence flows. It is called the Anāhaṭa Chakra in the Hindū writings.

How is that centre of the Ātmā in the heart to be discovered. There are two ways: one, the general and the other, the special. In the former, the impurities of the heart have to be cleansed. As one excellent book graphically puts it: Before the soul can stand in the presence of the Masters (who have themselves realised Ātmā), it must have washed its feet in the blood of the heart.

In the later case, a special mode of meditation has to be adopted to bring about the result. Taking into consideration the first way, we find it is one common to all humanity. What has to be done is to level to the ground the thick wall—in the heart—that interposes between the soul and its object of realisation. That wall is made up of our own thoughts and desires. So long as we cling to them, they find a good asylum in our heart and form a screen. But when, through experiences gained during a series of lives, the soul becomes convinced of their worthlessness, and is freed from them internally, then the Ātmā in the heart is realised. This is the result of many lives.

But there is a special procedure followed, which brings about the result sooner. It is by meditation upon the heart and discovering the centre. The physical heart is like a lotus-bud with its apex downwards. If we observe a lotus, we find that the lotus-bud, before it blossoms, hangs with its head downwards; but when it blossoms, the head is turned

upwards. It is only then that the fragrance arises and can be inhaled. So also Śrī Kṛṣṇa wants his Bhakṭa Uddhāva to meditate. He asks him, as said in the eleventh Skandha of the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, to meditate upon him on the Karṇikā or pericarp of the lotus-heart as being turned upwards. Only then will Ātmā's influence in the heart be felt. The upturning of the heart-lotus can be vindicated upon another ground. It is not the physical heart but the Astral that has to be meditated upon. The things of the Astral are reversed in the physical, and *vice versa*. Hence a number, say 543, in the physical will appear as 345 in the astral and *vice versa*. But if a person were merely to meditate upon the physical heart as it now is, he would stop the circulation of the blood in the physical, and go into a trance. Now that would be going backwards instead of forwards. That is what some hybernating animals do. Man has already worked in the heart and made the action in the sympathetic system, viz., the heart, automatical. He is now working at the cerebro-spinal centres in the brain. Hence he will have to work in the future when the cerebro-spinal centres are done with, at the Astral heart (which is the higher) and not the physical

Putting it in another way, we find that animals work through the heart and derive thence the instinct which enables them to look within and reproduce the things without. But man works without through the brain. The next stage for man is intuition when with a knowledge of the relationship obtained through the brain, he will go back again into the heart and

develop intuition, viz., the power of looking within as well as without. That intuition will be now developed by meditating upon the heart as a lotus blossom and thus realising the influence of Ātmā.

The position in the body of the lotus blossom to be meditated upon is this. The topmost point of the lotus-bud will be the place at which the bottom of the lotus blossom will have to begin. The lotus will have to be meditated upon as Sāttvic or white in colour and not Rājasic or red in colour; since the latter represents the Kāma or passion. Now the heart is full of passions and hence of red colour. We have to bring about purity through meditation upon the lotus as white in colour.

Regarding the petals and other appendages of the Lotus, the Upanishads throw out many hints. The petals of the heart are in some places said to be four or eight; in others twelve and so on. These numbers are from different standpoints. When I come to treat of Yoga, I shall give more information on this topic. But Śrī Kṛṣṇa asked his disciple Uddhāva to meditate upon the heart-lotus as having eight petals only. This probably refers to the eight directions—the cardinal and the ordinal. The Upanishads have much to say upon the subject and locate different powers therein. In the early stages, they are not required. Round the central Karṇikā or pericarp, Śrī Kṛṣṇa advises that the Sun, the Moon, and the Agni (fire) be meditated upon. This probably refers to the three worlds of which those are the presiding intelligences. After passing through

the three worlds and their intelligences, and before the Turiya or fourth world is reached for salvation, there is the Rubicon to be crossed. In some places, the Upanishads describe it as the Hṛdaya-granṭhi or heart-knot, as in the passage :

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।

क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन्दृष्टे परावरे ॥

—*Muṇḍaka-Upanishad*, II, ii, 8.

In the *Taiṭṭirīya-Upanishad*, it is described as the Hṛdaya-guhā or heart-cave. Here it is the Karṇikā or pericarp. Those who have analysed it in practice know well that it has a number of passages like tubes. As a knot, the soul has to break this open, ere it can pass to the state of Salvation. As a passage, either in the cave or pericarp, it has to be levelled. Then is the soul able to pass higher with all the experiences which it has garnered down below. Then is it able to be face to face with the Ātmā, in the fourth condition above the pericarp, when its powers become coextensive with the latter. It is said that all the initiations that are said to take place of a disciple by his Guru turn upon the opening of this passage only. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says thus :

श्रीभगवानुवाच—सम आसन आसीनः समकायो यथासुखं । हस्तावुत्संग  
आधाय स्वनासाऽऽप्रकृतेक्षणः ॥ प्राणस्य शोधयेन्मार्गं पूरकुंभकरेचकैः ।  
विपर्ययेणापि शनैरभ्यसेन्निर्जितेन्द्रियः ॥ हृद्यविच्छिन्नमोकारं घण्टानादं विसो-  
र्णवत् । प्राणेनोदीर्य तत्राय पुनः संवेशयेत्स्वरम् ॥ एवं प्रणवसंयुक्तं प्राणमेव

समभ्यसेत् । दशकृत्वस्त्रिषवणं मासादवाग्जितानिलः ॥ हृत्पुण्डरीकमन्तस्थ-  
 मूर्ध्वनालमधोमुखम् । ध्यात्वोर्ध्वमुखमुन्निद्रमष्टपत्रं सकर्णिकम् ॥ कर्णिकायां  
 न्यसेत्सूर्यं सोमाग्नीनुत्तरोत्तरम् । वह्निमध्ये स्मरेद्रूपं ममैतद्ध्यानमङ्गलम् ॥  
 समं प्रशान्तं सुमुखं दीर्घचारुचतुर्भुजम् । सुचारुसुन्दरप्रीवं सुकपोलं  
 शुचिस्मितम् ॥ समानकर्णविन्यस्तस्फुरन्मकरकुण्डलम् । हेमाम्बरं धनश्यामं  
 श्रीवत्सश्रीनिकेतनम् ॥ शङ्खचक्रगदापद्मवनमालाविभूषितम् । नूपुरैर्विल-  
 सत्पादं कौस्तुभप्रभयायुतम् ॥ युमत्किरीटकटकटिसूत्राङ्गदायुतम् ।  
 सर्वाङ्गसुन्दरंहयं प्रसादसुमुखेक्षणम् ॥ सुकुमारमभिध्यायेत्सर्वाङ्गेषु मनोदधत् ।  
 इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यो मनसाकृष्यतन्मनः ॥ बुद्ध्यासारथिना धीरः  
 प्रणयेन्मयि सर्वतः ॥ तत्सर्वव्यापकं चित्तमाकृष्यैकत्र धारयेत् । नान्यानि  
 चिन्तयेद्भूयः सुस्मितं भावयेन्मुखम् ॥ तत्रलब्धपदंचित्तमाकुष्य व्योम्नि  
 धारयेत् । तच्च त्यक्त्वा मदारोहो न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥ एवं समाहित-  
 मतिर्मा मेवात्मानमात्मनि । विचष्टे मयि सर्वात्मन् ज्योतिर्ज्योतिषिसंयुतम् ॥  
 ध्यानेनेत्थं सुतीव्रेण युज्यतो योगिनो मनः । संयास्यत्याशु निर्वाणं द्रव्यज्ञान-  
 क्रियाभ्रमः ॥

Therefore Śrī Kṛṣṇa replied thus : ' Be seated in a posture (Āsana) that is neither high nor low, with your body erect and in an easy posture. Place your hands on the lap. Fix your gaze at the tip of the nose. Purify the tracks of Prāṇa by pūraka (inspiration), kumbhaka (cessation), and rechaka (expiration) and then again in the reverse way. (Then remove the tip of the thumb and breathe out through the right nostril. Reverse the process by breathing in through the right nostril; then retaining the breath in both the nostrils, and then letting out the breath through the left nostril.) Practise this Prāṇāyāma gradually with your senses controlled. Then take upwards with

Prāṇa Om which is unobstructive like the sound of a bell stationed in heart and like the stalk of a lily. Thus practise Prāṇāyāma accompanied by the Praṇava, reciting the latter ten times. Continue the practice three times a day ; and within a month, you will be able to control the Prāṇa. The lotus of the heart has its stalk upwards and the flower downwards, facing below. Meditate upon it however as facing upwards, full-blown with eight petals and the pericarp. On the pericarp, think of the Sun, the Moon and Agni, one after another. Meditate upon my form in Agni—this is the auspicious meditation—gifted with becoming limbs, quiescent, having a beautiful face, four long arms, high graceful neck, beautiful cheeks and charming and smiling face, having on the two ears makara-shaped ear-rings, clad in gold-hued raiment, of dark-blue colour, gifted with the marks of Śrīvatsa and Śrī, adorned with conch, discus, mace, lotus and garland of wild flowers : with the two feet adorned with Nupuras ; decked with a brilliant diadem set with Kaustubha gem, kataka, Katisūtra and Aṅgada which is consummately beautiful, the faces and eyes charming with delight. First meditate upon all my limbs . . . . . then let the mind withdraw the senses from their objects. Then draw the concentrated mind completely towards me by means of Buddhi, the charioteer. Then give up all other limbs and concentrate your mind on one thing only—my smiling face. Do not meditate upon anything else. Then withdraw the concentrated mind from that and fix it on Ākāśa : give that up also

and being fixed on Me (as Brahman), think of nothing at all. You shall see Me in Ātmā as identical with all Ātmās, even as one light is identical with another light. The delusions about object, knowledge, and action shall then completely disappear.'—*Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, skandha xi, chapter 14.

The other means through which this result can be brought about is through the Gāyatrī Mantra. This path of meditation is for all persons for whom worship is purely mental. In the Gāyatrī Mantra, the Dvijas or twice-born in India are directed to utter, through their purified bodies, Mantras or potent words with the mind, etc., in order to bring about the same result but more quickly. Mantras uttered through impure bodies are likely to produce more harm than good. With regard to Mantras generally, and especially the Gāyatrī Mantra, Manu has two passages in his Smṛiti. The first is about the Mantras generally.

विधियज्ञाजपयज्ञो विशिष्टो दशभिर्गुणैः ।

उपांशुस्त्याच्छतभिः सहस्रो मानसस्मृतः ॥

The Japa-yajña, or sacrifice of (loud) repetition, has ten times more efficacy than sacrifices done according to the ordinary rules; the Japa, when uttered in a silent tone, has one-hundredfold more efficacy; the mental has a thousandfold.

Thus the efficacy of a Mantra is more and more, as it is uttered in a subdued tone. When uttered silently, it affects the second world: mentally, it affects the mental or third world. In the last case, Devas therein are attracted and the higher effects are produced.



Of all the Mantras, Manu states that Gāyaṭrī is the foremost. The authority bearing upon it is :

एकाक्षरं परं ब्रह्म प्राणायाम परं तपः ।

गायत्र्यास्तु परं नास्ति मौनात्सत्यं विशिष्यते ॥

‘The one-lettered syllable (Om) is Parambrahman ; Prāṇāyāma is the highest of ṭapas ; there is no higher (Mantra) than Gāyaṭrī ; Truth is higher than (the vow of) Silence.’ Thus is the Gāyaṭrī reputed to be the highest of Mantras. Analysing the words of the Gāyaṭrī, we have :

ॐ भूः भुवः सुवः । तत् सवितुः वरेण्यं । भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि ।

धियो यः नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

After uttering the word Om and the names of the three worlds, we get the following meaning : ‘We (or let us) meditate upon that which is excellent and, which is the effulgence of that resplendent Savitṛ. The Savitṛ may mean the sun or any Ishta-devatā. But its highest meaning is Ātmā, the supreme, viz., the Paramātmā. In the above, the Praṇava should come first, as it should precede all actions and thoughts. But why should the three worlds be inserted before the regular prayer? Why not the seven? Should the names of the worlds precede it? In the body of the prayer, why should the plural ‘we’ occur? In order to utter mentally the Gāyaṭrī, the idea corresponding to each word should arise in the mind, as each word is uttered. First comes the physical pronunciation, aloud at first and afterwards silent. When it has been uttered for a series of

years, it becomes automatic. Then, when the automatic habit has become established, mental utterance is easy. In it, the idea corresponding to each word should arise in the mind, as each word is uttered. Therefore after uttering the Praṇava and purifying the atmosphere, one should evoke the idea corresponding to the three worlds. The whole physical world is after the physical human body. The latter is but a small picture of the former. Hence the word Bhūḥ should evoke the idea of a big physical form, like that of man's physical body. Similarly the names of the second and third worlds, when uttered, should evoke the Sūkshma and Kāraṇa forms, like the respective bodies of men, but coextensive with the whole space of the universe. After rising above these forms, he should rise to the Turiya or fourth condition, where all forms are lost and Oneness alone prevails. It will be seen that the word 'we' is not used in a merely formal sense, like the editorial 'we'. It is used intentionally to express the fact that all separateness is lost in that condition. Being devoid then of all the sense of self, there is the prayer for the illumination of the Buddhi of all. When all are illumined, he who is but a part of all is naturally illumined.

But, as it is difficult for people to imagine such forms, an alternative course is prescribed. The stages are gone through in the heart, as in the heart are all in the universe. *Chhāndogya-Upanishad*, Adhyāya III, chapters xii and xiii deal with this.

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## A PERSONAL OR ANTHROPOMORPHIC GOD

IN the western religion, two aspects of God are given, the personal and the anthropomorphic. What are they in Hindūism? How are they to be conceived of? In the West, there is much confusion regarding the ideas to be attached to them. As stated before, the word 'person' is from the word *persona*, mask. Hence it denotes a limited or conditioned Being. Even the anthropomorphic God has in it the same idea of being conditioned. How then are we to differentiate between them? In a personal God, a form or body like that of a human being, though it may be pervading nearly the whole of space, is superimposed upon Him : while the anthropomorphic God is freed from that form and made to have the human attributes of love, etc. The latter has no hands or legs or any other limbs of a human form ; but is made to be an abstract entity having love and other human attributes. Hence this abstract entity too has the idea of *Aham* or self as opposed to the not-self. He too therefore is conditioned.

How are these to be regarded from the standpoint of Hindūism? As stated before, we start with a duality caused by Purusha and Prakṛti in the conditioned state of the universe below the non-dual One, the Absolute Parabrahman. These two have three stages. The first stage is where Purusha and Prakṛti are merged as one with the power of evolving into two; the third or last stage is where they are seen as separate factors working together. The middle or second stage is the critical one where the two are seen as two, but also as being inseparable. This is a universal law throughout all kingdoms of nature.

In sex, there are three stages according to Hindūism, asexual, bisexual and sexual; in time, night, twilight and day; in science, when two gases combine like oxygen and hydrogen, the latent, the critical and the patent; so also Purusha and Prakṛti are as one in the first stage; in the second stage, it is Purusha-Prakṛti, where they are linked together inseparably; in the last stage, they are seen as separate factors but co-operating with one another, as positive and negative or male and female, through the combination of which the offspring, the form-universe, is made possible. The Trimūrṭi, Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahmā may represent these three stages. But, if the Trinity are represented in the concrete form of human bodies, then they come under the third stage only. Hence the Upanishads represent the higher stage only. The *Paingala-Upanishad* describes the three stages of the universe as the Avyakṛta (unmanifested), Avyakṛta-Vyakṛta and Vyakṛta or manifested; and it makes

the Trimūrṭi correspond with these, while the Purāṇas take both into account and lay stress upon the lower or personal character of the Trinity—suitable for the brains of the ignorant.

In this connection, we may refer to the three sects in South India who hold three different tenets which have had the effect of dividing them into three hotly contending camps. They are the Ḍvaiṭins or dualists, the Visishtāḍvaiṭins or qualified non-dualists and the Aḍvaiṭins or non-dualists. The essence of their contention is mainly about the above three stages. The dualists contend that Purusha and Prakṛti are two separate principles, separate from God; the non-dualists urge that they are one in God; while the qualified non-dualists take the middle course, maintaining that the two principles are neither separate from nor one with God. These three correspond closely with the Avyakṭa, Avyakṭa-Vyakṭa and Vyakṭa stages already mentioned. They are but different ways of looking at the One, and can be reconciled from that standpoint.

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## PERSONAL GOD

IF the third stage of manifestation introduces the element of a personal God, how does Hindūism conceive of it? In this connection, the fundamental proposition of Hindūism should be reiterated: 'Man is but a small picture of the Whole Universe.' Man has not only a physical body but also two other bodies, the Sūkshma or subtle and the Kāraṇa or causal. It is said in the *Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad* that the subtle body functions in dream and the causal body in dreamless sleep. The subtle body is said to possess the selfsame organs as the physical, but to have internal consciousness as opposed to that of the physical which is external. Hence it should present an appearance similar to the physical. As the physical body is composed of matter belonging to the physical world, so the subtle body is composed of the matter of the second or subtle world. The third body is composed of the matter of the third state or world; but is not described, as the two lower bodies are. It is said to be 'एकीभूतः' or of homogeneous atomic matter. As all atoms are said to be spherical, so also this body is described as oval in form. In the Theosophical literature, it is called the auric egg. Above

these three states of the three bodies is the Turiya, fourth stage, to reach which leads to Salvation, free from the cycle of births and deaths.

Now if man has these three bodies and if above them there is the seat of salvation, there should be something corresponding to these facts in the universe. The first world Bhūh should present the same appearance, though in a magnified scale, as the physical body. It is said that there is the Virāt-svarūpa wherein the eyes, ears, etc., as of the human body are to be found. In this physical body, there are myriads of cells to be found, some of which are forming, some of which are replaced by others, and so on. Similarly each one of our bodies is but a cell in the Virāt-svarūpa, disintegrating with each death and reintegrating with each birth. If this analogy is pursued further, we get many ideas from it. Similarly each one of our astral or subtle bodies is but a cell in the astral Virāt-form of the Universe. Coming to the Kāraṇa body we find, as stated before that it is oval in form. The same is the case with the universe as a whole and that is why it is called the Brahmāṇḍa or Brahmā's egg. Man is said to be a Piṇḍāṇḍa, as stated in *Yogakūṇḍalī-Upanishad*. In the cosmic egg, there are many tiny eggs which are the human Kāraṇa bodies. The cosmic astral and Kāraṇa bodies are called in the Upanishads Svarāt and Samrāt.

In each human body, there is said to be an intelligence presiding over it. In the physical, it is called Visva ; in the subtle, Taijasa ; in the Kāraṇa, Prājña.

Though there are three intelligences, each presiding over one body, yet they act together as one. On account of the different Upādhis or bodies, they are called by different names. Similarly in the universe, the one intelligence functioning in the different states is by called by different names, which are Vaisvānara, Hiranyagarbha and Īsvara. Other names are also given, such as Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva.

In this manner is the personal God of Hindūism depicted. There is not one personal God. There is the physical personal God presiding over the Bhūloka; there is the astral presiding over the Bhuvarloka ; and there is the Kāraṇa personal God presiding over the Suvarloka. But all these are but aspects of the One ; just as in man there are different intelligences that are aspects of the One.

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## MĀYĀ

IN analysing the whole world into the dual Purusha and Prakṛti, consciousness and matter, the Dvaitins or dualists hold they are separate in God while the Viśiṣṭādvaitins hold they are inseparably linked to God, though separate from Him. The latter have two similes to illustrate the relationship between God and the dual principles, *i.e.*, the guṇi-guṇa-bhāva or Śarīri-sarīra-bhāva. Just as the qualities are inseparable from their possessor, just as the soul seems inseparable from the body of matter, so also God is inseparable from matter ; so also God is inseparable from the soul, as the soul seems inseparable from the matter in which it functions. But the Advaitins cannot logically understand how in God, the unconditioned, there can be two principles linked to Him, though inseparable. Two objects or principles, should they both exist together, will but condition one another. They can exist in two ways only ; one existing apart from another or interpenetrating another in space. In the former, the one becomes conditioned by the other in place or locality ; in the latter, the one becomes conditioned by the other in condition, the one being composed of more clarified matter. Hence in both

cases, the Advaitins hold that God becomes limited by locality or condition and therefore destructible, since God that is excluded from any place or any condition is liable to destruction.

How then are we to negate the existence of the above two, consciousness and matter, in God? There are two ways of dealing with this problem. Either both of them are the two poles of the absolute; or to regard matter as a Māyā or an illusion and the other, *viz.*, consciousness as the Absolute itself. Just as the two poles of electricity, positive and negative are as one in their neutral condition, so also Pradhāna (matter) and Purusha may be said to be the two aspects, but are one in their neutral condition of the Absolute. This means that the above dual principles are one noumenally but are many phenomenally. But that is not the view which the leading Advaitin of South India took. He made Purusha to be the Absolute itself and matter to be māyā or illusion. Attributing to matter, the idea of multiplicity and to consciousness, the idea of oneness, he made all ideas of manyness in consciousness to arise from its connection with matter. The mind which according to the West is one of an abstract character is made by the Hindūs to be an organ composed of matter but only subtle. Thus consciousnesses of higher degrees arise, according to this view, through the higher and higher subtleness of matter. A metaphysician like Bhāmaṭī will argue नहि कश्चित् संदिग्धे अहं वा नाहं चेति—"none doubts in the least—am I or am I not?" But all say—अहमस्मि—"I am". From that, we

cannot but conclude that there is one eternal consciousness within. So that when consciousness is thus disposed of, what is to be done with matter? Should it exist in Brahman, then it will but condition It? Therefore the Advaitins contend that matter is Māyā.

What then is Māyā? It is through its misunderstanding that attacks after attacks have been levelled against the Advaitins? It is through the same misunderstanding that some Advaitins lead perverted lives. Some understand the word Māyā thus: या मा सा माया. Changing the position of the two letters मा and या, they will make it या मा, which means 'that which is not'. Hence that which is not is māyā. If Matter which is Māyā is not, why all the appearance of matter? There is no incentive to action. Some Advaitins make a travesty of the doctrine of māyā, by making it support their evil lives. But true Vedāntic writers will tell us that māyā is neither Saṭ nor Asaṭ but is Saṭ-Asaṭ. Saṭ, the true is God. While Asaṭ, the false is non-existence. But what is matter? It is neither Saṭ, the God nor Asaṭ the non-existent. It is that which seems to be Asaṭ; but is nevertheless Saṭ. Matter appears to be different from God, but it is God. There are two terms used by Paṭaṅjali in his Yoga-Sūtras which are विपर्यय (Viparyaya) and विकल्प (Vikalpa). They are translated as misconception and fancy. In the latter, the object thought of is impossible of existence, like the son of a barren woman. In misconception, the object thought of is mistaken for another, like a rope in darkness for serpent. Māyā is therefore not Vikalpa

but only Viparyaya. It is misconception and not fancy.

This misconception is termed अघ्यास by Śrī Śaṅkarāchārya in his introduction to *Vedānta-Sūtras*. He defines it thus :

स्मृतिरूपः परत्र पूर्वदृष्टावभासः

“ The apparent presentation in the form of remembrance to consciousness of some thing previously observed in some other thing.” Then taking into consideration the other definitions, he winds up thus :

सर्वथाऽपि त्वन्यस्यान्यधर्मावभासतां न व्यभिचरति ।

तथा च लोकेऽनुभवः शुक्तिका हि रजतवदवभासते एकश्चन्द्रः सद्वितीयवदिति ॥

“ But all these definitions agree in so far as they represent superimposition as the apparent presentation of the attributes of one thing in another thing. And therewith agrees also the popular view which is exemplified by expressions such as the following : mother-of-pearl appears like silver. The moon although one only appears as if she were double.” This wrong superimposition of one object over another can be removed only by the withdrawal of such an idea, which withdrawal goes in Sanskrit by the name of ‘अपवाद.’

There are two view-points from which Māyā is viewed in the Hindū Scriptures. The one is अवच्छिन्न and the other is प्रतिबिम्ब. The former is the theory of division and the latter, that of reflection. The former

is illustrated by the ether pervading all objects. When we talk of the ether in a house and the ether in a pot, we think as if the ether were divided into two. The ether is one alone, though it seems to be divided. The latter is illustrated by glass, water, etc., where objects are reflected: the reflected objects being but illusory. Regarding these two theories, there are two Sūtras in the *Vedānta-Sūtras* which lend their authorities to them. The first Sūtra is the 43rd in number and the other is the 50th in Adhyāya II, Pādā iii. The first runs thus: अंशो नानाव्यपदेशात् अन्यथा चापि

दाशकितवादित्वमधीयत एके

The second is—आभास एव च

The two words that have to be noticed in the above two Sūtras are Amsa and Abhāsa. The one means 'portion' and the other 'reflection'. It is on these two words hinge the controversies between the Advaitins and the Visishtādvaitins. The word Amsa or portion is also used by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* in the verse 7 of Adhyāya xv: समैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।

The contention of Śrī Saṅkarāchārya is that all things are but reflections of the one Brahman. Others contend that all are but portions of that one. In order to get over the difficulty of the word 'portion' in the above first Sutra, Saṅkara introduces the word इव along with Amsa, so that he makes it mean 'a portion as it were'. He thinks that all are apparently a portion, but not really so, of God. The difficulty with him is that he cannot admit a part of the infinite.

Any number can be a part of a greater number but not of the infinite. A number divided by infinity is no number but Zero. How then can we predicate a portion of the infinity? Hence the relationship between the infinite and finite is one of reflection and not parts to the whole. Therefore Śaṅkara inclines to the theory of reflection. But is there any case of God where the relationship of Amsa can be predicated? Śaṅkara does not clearly say anything about it. To me, it appears thus. As Advaitins put it, there are two aspects of God, the Nirguṇa and the Saguṇa, the Absolute and the relative, Parabrahman and 'Īśvara'. It is true no relationship can be predicated between the Absolute and the relative. Parabrahman being non-dual is above the dual mind which demands for its existence the duality of the subject and object. How then can the mind reach in thought that non-dual One? The mind being but relation, no relationship can be posited between it and the Absolute. In other words, we fondly superimpose the mind upon that which is above relation? But relationship can be asserted between two conditioned ones. Īśvara or the Saguṇa is the highest possible in this kalpa. It is only by courtesy we sometimes call it eternal or infinite. It is subject to destruction though after a long time. Another 'Īśvara' will arise in another kalpa. The word "Amsa" may be applied to this 'Īśvara' as contrasted with all other conditioned things that are only a part of Him. It is in this way that we may explain the two statements of the *Veḍānta-Sūtras*. The word "Amsa" may be applied to "Īśvara"; while the

word *Pratibimba* may be applied to *Parabrahman*. We need not introduce the word “*iva*” or ‘as it were’ along with *Amsa*. We may thus reconcile the two statements of the two *Pakshas* or standpoints. By making the two similes apply to one and the same aspect of God, many writers have produced confusion.

Let us study the question of *Māyā* in the light of modern science. I shall here reproduce what I stated in a pamphlet of mine called *Professor Bergson and the Hindū Vedānta* :

We all know that the modern scientists analysed the whole world into a number of substances which were, till some years ago, called elements, since they thought they were no further decomposable. Now even hydrogen—the lightest of the so-called elements—is analysed into a number of electrons or ions. These ions again are traced to the ether, where they are found to be but vortical motion. It is surmised that each vortical centre is but a miniature solar system, with particles rotating round a centre. Moreover each object, though appearing solid, is but an aggregation of particles of matter in a state of ceaseless vibration. Hence even the seemingly solid matter has its ceaseless change. Only it is a change in space. Coming to the mind, we find there is change in it also; but it is a change of state. The mind is ever running through the laws of association of ideas, similar and dissimilar, as *Bain* puts it. Even when we see the same object again or remember a thought, it is not the same object or thought that is repeated again in our mind. There are some additions or subtractions. Hence whether we study mind or matter, there is always change: in the case of the former, there is a change of state, which is becoming; in the case of the latter, there is the change of place, which is moving. Hence all are moving or becoming. The universe is nothing but a vast ceaseless change of moving and becoming.

Two very striking similes are given by Prof. Bergson. The intellect is compared to a cinematograph. In the latter, the moving scenes, say of a cavalry regiment, are represented as if marching. How is it done? Each position of the whole scene though moving is photographed as if fixed. Then all the views are joined together and arranged side by side on the film and passed across the scene in rapid succession. Then they present to us this moving picture. Similarly though the whole nature is moving, the mind takes photographs of different positions of it, as if fixed. Though it may seem to us that things are fixed, yet mobility and change are going on ceaselessly and continuously.

Another happy simile is given to show that immobility is but a Māyā, an appearance. It is drawn from the effects produced upon the eye when two railway trains pass. When they travel in the same direction and at the same rate, they seem not to be moving: but when they move at different rates, they seem to be moving in opposite directions: but should they travel in opposite directions, they seem to be moving at twice the speed at which they are really moving.

From the foregoing, it is clear that all objects which seem to be immobile are but motion in reality. It is only our senses which deceive us into thinking that they are solid. But when these very senses perceive those objects through higher instruments such as microscope, then is the real state perceived. Hindūism states that man is progressing and that there are higher or subtle instruments of senses in him. They are natural and not artificial. He has subtle eyes, subtle ears and other organs located in his higher or Sūkshma body. When through the senses of that subtle body an object is perceived, it is not the outer form of the object that is perceived but the inner. Then is the life perceived within. It is



called *Antaḥ-prajña*. Again when the vision is elevated to the third condition, it is stated that both the inner and the outer are perceived at one glance. Then it is *Ubhayataḥ-prajña*. But when one rises to the *Ṭuriya* state of oneness where all distinctions of outer and inner are lost, then all things there appear as the one Brahman. It is only through the *Upādhis* or vehicles through which perception arises that objects differ. As are the instruments, so are the objects seen. But when one sees through *Brāhmīc* vision, all appear as the one Brahman only. Hence *Advaitīns* did and do not deny the existence of objects as they are seen now. They assigned to them a relative existence only. They are but appearance. Though seeming to be such objects, they are but Brahman in reality.

Both Brahman and objects exist always and hence are eternal. Brahman alone is real; but the objects as such are unreal. Reality is that which does not change its *Nāma* and *Rūpa*, name and form. Brahman does not change its name and form; but the objects do, though they are Brahman. At one time, the matter appears under the form of a bracelet; at another time, another ornament and so on. Hence from the *vyāvahārika* or phenomenal standpoint alone, matter exists: but from the *Pāramārthika* or noumenal standpoint, it is not as such, since it is Brahman alone.

Hence it is that *Advaitīns* take two view-points, one that of non-duality and the other of duality. One should not be confounded with the other. It is

through such a confusion, some have made a travesty of the doctrine of Māyā. All questions of ethics or right conduct are based upon duality. There should be two individuals, one of whom should conduct himself rightly or wrongly towards the other. But in Brahman that is non-dual, the questions of ethics do not rise. This does not mean that one can dispense with morality in this condition of duality. Only by confirming to morality here, can one rise to that condition of Oneness. Brahman being above mind, one should become Amanaska, i.e., rise above mind, in order to be above morality. Even then the body of such a person, should it choose to remain in it, will not do anything immoral. He will be morality itself and setting an example of it. Hence Śrī Kṛṣṇa says though he has no Karma to do, for perfecting himself, he is yet doing it; otherwise he will be but setting a bad example to others, since all look up to the leaders for examples.

Generally people in the world put the question—why should the Absolute, the non-dual, bring into existence this dual universe? Of course, the how or manner in which the dual universe arises can be explained: but not the why or reason of it. We ask for the reason that induced that Absolute to bring the universe into existence. In other words, we superimpose a mind over God when he is above it, since the reason is but an attribute of the mind. The questioner is but begging the question.

In *Yoga-Vāsishtha*, the question is put in another form. Rshi Gāḍhi while he was making a *ṭapas* to

Vishṇu asked Him to be blessed with a sight of Māyā. To which Vishṇu replied : "Thou shalt not only visit Māyā but also be able to overstep māyā." It is only by crossing Māyā that one will know its true nature and cognise the one above it, *viz.*, Brahman. One day whilst the Ṛshi was making ṭapas in the waters, the boon of Vishṇu recurred to his mind. Then he fell into a reverie, when many scenes were passed through. After dreaming of the death of his then body, his soul got into another body, *viz.*, that of an outcaste of a dog-eater. When that body grew old, his wife and children died through a famine in the land; then he got into a fit of vairāgya and travelled through a country, where he was installed as a king. All his subjects got into fire to be devoured by the flames on account of their contamination with him, when the king followed suit. With the palpitation caused by the fire in that dream, he found his body awake in the waters of the tank. Afterwards on a guest describing to him as real the scenes which he passed through in his reverie, he went to the very place and found, as physical, the scenes enacted in his reverie. Here was confusion worse confounded. So he invoked upon Vishṇu again who said that as the physical universe is nothing but the thought made flesh of the Divine Brahma, so the dream thought of by him who was a Ṛshi objectivised itself in the physical world. Then Vishṇu took him above Māyā into Brahman, when he found the true nature of Māyā. It is by getting out of a house after being in it, that a man can understand its true nature, both in and out. So

also it is only by getting out of Māyā after being in it as almost all are, that one can understand truly the nature of Māyā. Then alone Brahman can be cognised.

Then as regards the cognition of Brahman, the ways differ as we are concerned with the Saguna or the Nirguna, the conditioned or the unconditioned. In the case of the former, there are two things to be done; one is that the soul has to arise above its abhimāna or identification with the body: the other is that the soul has to attain the conditioned Brahman. The *Chhāndogya-Upanishad* viii-xii-3 therefore says thus :

एवमेवैष संप्रसादोऽस्माच्छरीरात्समुत्थाय परं ज्योतिरुपसंपद्यस्वेन रूपेणाभिनिष्पद्यते ॥ “Even like unto them, the soul through Samprasāda (serenity or grace) issues forth from its body, attains the Paramjyotis and assumes its own genuine state.”

Should the Jivātma rise to Paramātmā, it should fulfil the qualifications of the latter. The former is said to be a ray out of the sun of Paramātmā and has the potentialities of the latter in a seed condition. The latter is composed of all the rays of the former. Such being the case, unless and until each soul is at one with all other souls, it cannot therefore reach the fountain-head. Therefore is the sense of non-separateness insisted upon, as the precedent condition for reaching the goal. Therefore Śrī Sāṅkara states in his commentary upon the *Veḍānta-Sūtras* that a soul after reaching Saguna Brahman attains the Nirguna, when the conditioned Brahman becomes merged into

the unconditioned one. The other way is said to be the attaining of Nirguṇa Brahman directly and not through the Sagūṇa. Here it is a difference of states. Sri Śaṅkara gives the simile of a man suffering from a disease. The moment the disease leaves him, that moment he is all hale and healthy. Similarly the disease of Māyā is upon all souls. The moment it takes farewell of them, they are in their proper and natural condition. There is not the going or coming that can be predicated of Nirguṇa Brahman ; it is only applicable to the Sagūṇa. Difference of state is of the former ; and difference of place, of the latter.

Then the question arises whether a person reaching Nirguṇa Brahman direct has not to go through the Sagūṇa, though he may not halt therein. According to Advaitism, the Sagūṇa Brahman that is conditioned is veiled by the matter called Māyā ; while the Jīvātma's veil is called Avidyā. The difference between Māyā and Avidyā is that in the latter case the veil of matter creates the idea of multiplicity of souls ; while the former makes the idea of separateness in the Lord—as separate from Nirguṇa Brahman. In the Sagūṇa, all souls are one in Him ; yet he has the idea of Self which does not exist in the Nirguṇa. The Nirguṇa is that which has not the ideas of Self and not-Self, since it is one where all unite as one. The question is whether, in a soul trying to attain the final Brahman directly, it has to pass through the conditioned one, though it may not reach it permanently and then attain the Absolute when the conditioned becomes merged into it. There are

some Advaitins who contend that as soon as the veil of Avidyā is removed from soul, the soul attains Nirguṇa Brahman. Even the words attaining Nirguṇa Brahman are objected to by them. The soul is ever Brahman. There is to them then no such thing as getting to or attaining Brahman. In this case, the soul evolving the qualifications necessary for reaching the conditioned Brahman becomes unnecessary. The main qualifications necessary for such purpose is non-separateness or unselfishness. It is indeed difficult to think whether such a qualification will be dispensed with by Providence. The Upanishads and Purāṇas admit that out of the one Mahat the many units of Ahāṅkāra arise. In other words Avidyā, the segregate veil of the Jīvātma should arise out of Māyā, the collective veil of Paramātmā. If so, it is but right to suppose that on its return Avidyā should be refunded into the whole and then the soul should reach the Nirguṇa. Moreover *Yoga-Vāsishṭha* postulates four states and experiences of Ahāṅkāra. The first is the state of identification with the body : the second, when it is experienced as an atomic unit different from the body : the third, when it is one with the whole universe : and lastly, when it is above the universe. I therefore incline to the opinion that even in the case of a person wishing to reach Nirguṇa Brahman direct, the Sagūṇa will have to be passed through; only he will not have to say there long, but will flash through it at once to Nirguṇa Brahman.

The theory of Māyā is one which is assailed by such beings as Śrī Rāmānujāchāryar. He puts it

thus : “Is Māyā different from God or one with God ? If it is one, why name it separately. If it is separate, it is only a synonym for matter ? Why then should we introduce a separate word for it ?” So arguments after arguments are used against Śaṅkara. The Advaitins say Māyā is Anirvachanīyam, viz., is incapable of being described. That is only another way of expressing the inability of explaining it. But as regards the argument that, should Brahman be one, there should be posited the existence of none else, it is invulnerable. So there are the strong and the weak points in each of the theories broached by the different sectarians in India. Let each resort to that which is appeals to his intuition. Only it is a question which is very difficult—nay impossible—of solution, since it is a question in God that is above our mind. It is like three persons standing at the foot of a tree and being unable to scale one inch of it, fighting about the colour of a leaf that is at the topmost branch of the tree. Even the Advaitins admit that, from the Vyāvahārika or phenomenal standpoint, everything is dual. Let us scale the duality to the highest point ; and then it will be high time for us to fight about the highest of questions. Perhaps if we scale the Asvatṭha tree of the universe a fair way, these subtle questions may not arise at all.

## CONCLUSION

FROM the foregoing, it is clear that Hindūism is very broad and universal in its concept, as well as in its worship, of God. They are common to all classes of people, to all grades of intelligence that have existed or will exist. From the most ignorant biped akin to the quadrupeds to the most metaphysical genius akin to God, all can find a place in the Hindū religion. Yet in the present day, there is an anomaly that has to be removed. Among the present day Hindūs, there are two classes, those who are worshippers of images and those who call themselves Vedāntins and resort to the Absolute. But the intermediate grade is generally ignored, viz., the realisation of the Ātmā in the heart. Hence exists the anomaly in the lives of the Vedāntins generally. In the olden days, none would be allowed to enter into the highest grade, unless he had passed through the intermediate. Only when the desires are conquered, can one outgrow the heart or internal worship for the worship of God everywhere. Hence the Advaitins wanted the Sādhana Chaṭushtayas or four means of salvation to be developed to some degree at least before even a study of Vedānta could be entered into. The four means of



salvation are, as known, (1) Viveka or the theoretical discrimination of the real and the unreal; (2) Vairāgya or the practical mastery of the desires of the world both here and hereafter; (3) Shatsampatti, viz., sama or mental control, dama or bodily control, uparati (indifference), tīṭikshā (endurance of pains), samādhāna (peace of mind) and śraḍdhā (faith); (4) Mumukshaṭvam or longing after salvation. Thus Hindūism makes a man rise from class to class as in a school, until the highest stage is reached. When the lessons of an intermediate class are not mastered, naturally there is a lop-sided development only.

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